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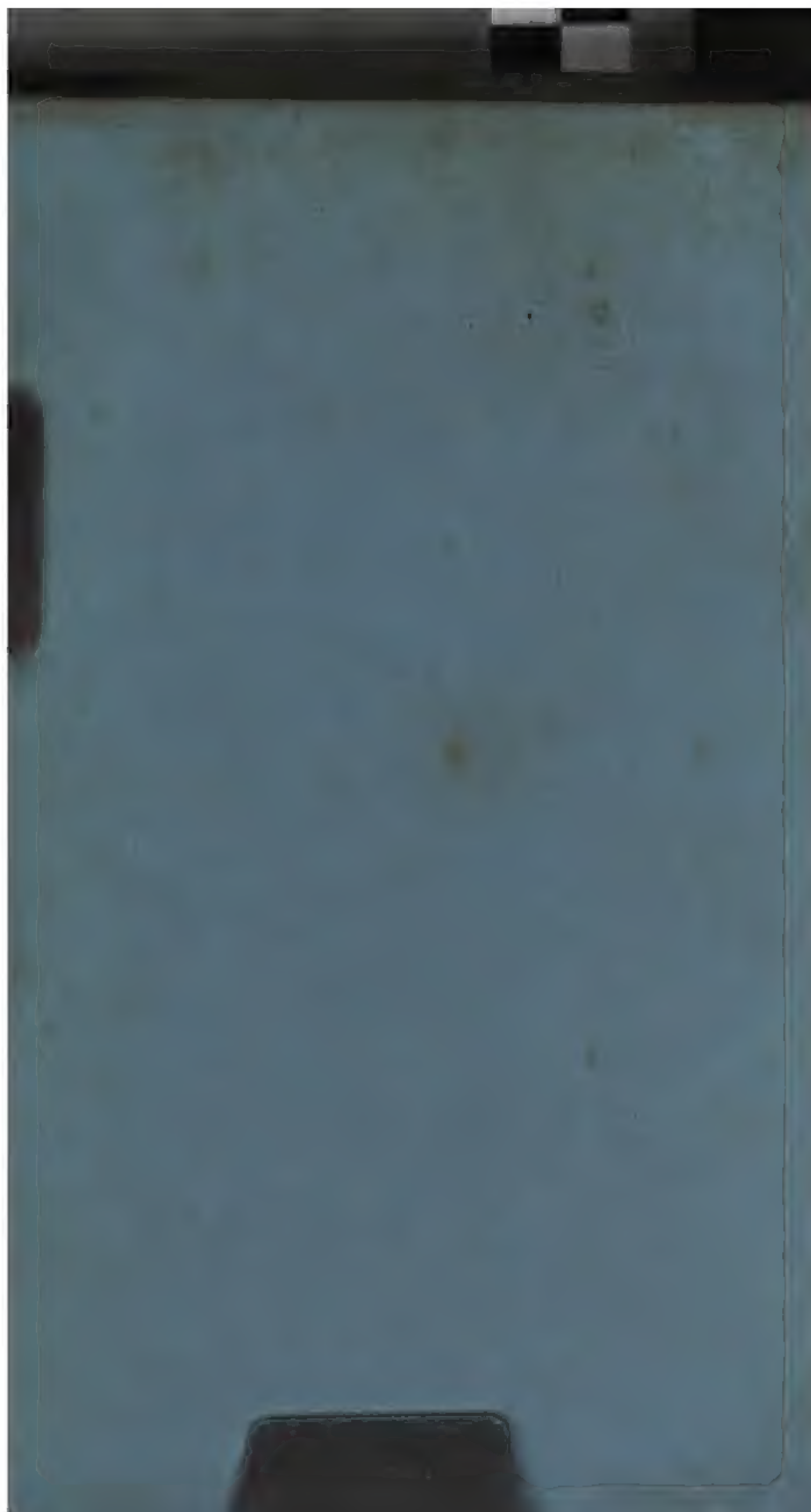
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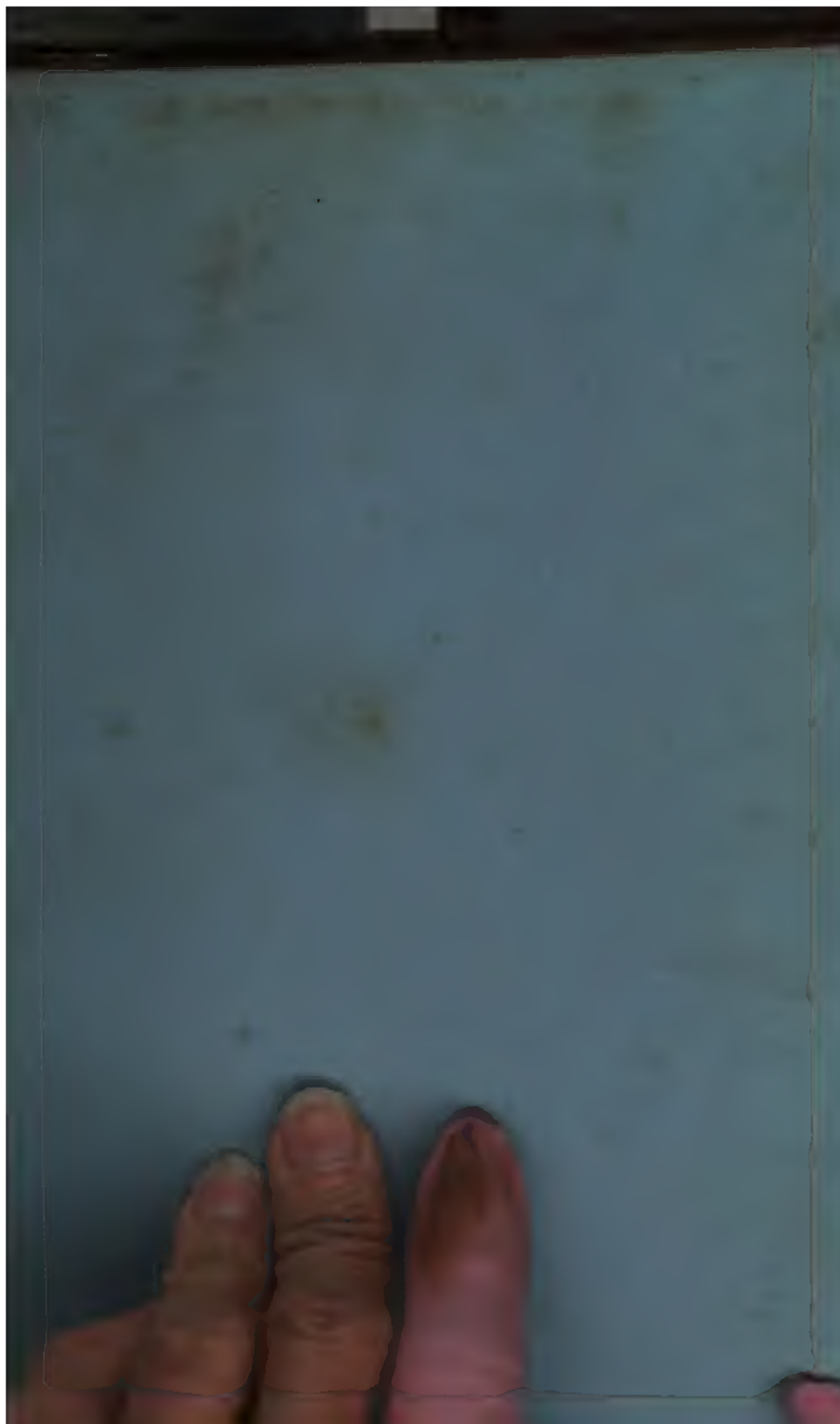
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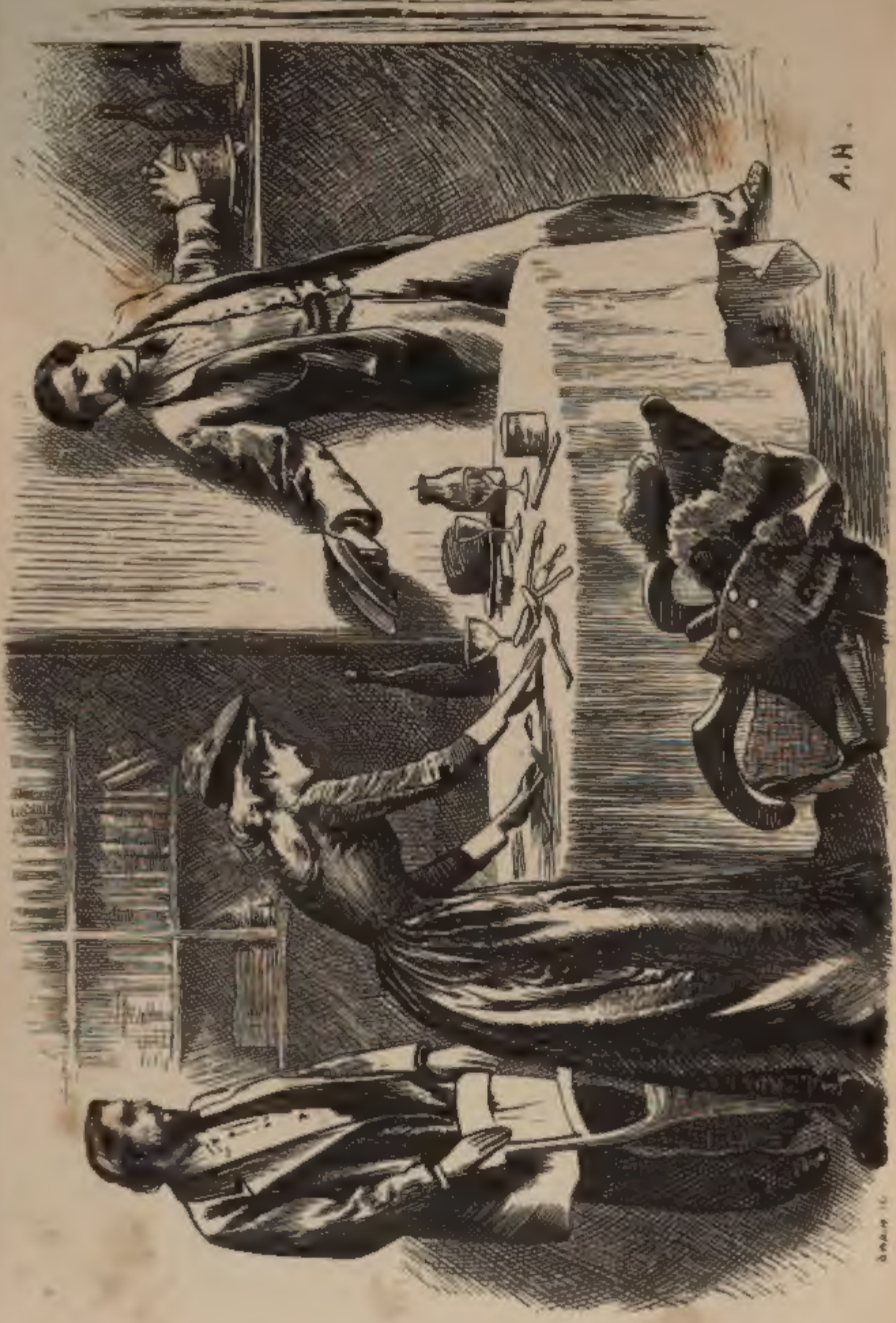
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CONTENTS OF VOL. XXXVIII.

	PAGE
Artificial Somnambulism. By RICHARD A. PROCTOR	52
Astley, Philip. By H. BARTON BAKER	471
Calculating Boys. By RICHARD A. PROCTOR	450
Captain Cole's Passenger. By JAMES PAYN	169
Cruel Fate. By A. MARY F. ROBINSON	43
Daughter of the Dark, The. By RICHARD DOWLING	85
Dinner, Why do we Eat our? By GRANT ALLEN	31
Donna Quixote. By JUSTIN M'CARTHY:	
Chap. VII. Gabrielle's Guests	1
VIII. 'Lady, dost thou not fear to stray?'	11
IX. At a Morning Concert	19
X. Fielding goes a-visiting	225
XI. 'One dream goes: another grows'	234
XII. Where Fielding went next, and next	243
XIII. The House on the Surrey side	257
XIV. 'A friend to her friend'	269
XV. A man and a brother	278
XVI. 'I will discourse with my philosopher'	478
XVII. 'I claim you as the sister of my soul'	488
XVIII. Pauline stoops to conquer	496
From the Chapel Roof. By HENRY W. LUCY	322
Great Revolution in Pitcairn, The. By MARK TWAIN	75
Half-an-hour at Didcot Junction. By J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON	287
Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets, The:	
IX. Torquato Tasso. By FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE	176
Independent Opinion, An. By JAMES PAYN	434
Irish Idyll, An. By the Author of 'The Queen of Connaught'	109
Legend of Cologne, A. By BRET HARTE	44
Literary Fable, A. By AUSTIN DOBSON	73
Maybud. By WILLIAM SENIOR	312
Night in the Highway, A. By F. W. ROBINSON	300
Overburdened	358
Oxford and Cambridge Rowing. By RICHARD A. PROCTOR	153
Peter the Great. By JAMES FORFAR	338
Queen of the Meadow. By CHARLES GIBBON:	
Chap. X. Sarah	107
XI. Miss Walton makes a friendly call	111
XII. A Happy Family.	116
XIII. Tramps	120
XIV. Very Annoying	125
XV. Good Resolutions	129
XVI. Diplomacy and Pigs	133
XVII. 'Am I in love?'	136
XVIII. Whispers	142
XIX. Bad News	148
XX. 'It was a Fool's Business'	359
XXI. Market-day, and Tea at the Vicarage	385
XXII. 'What is wrong?'	372

	PAGE
Queen of the Meadow. By CHARLES GIBBON— <i>continued</i> .	
xxiii. Gathering Eggs	380
xxiv. On the Balance	385
xxv. Beginning Harvest	391
xxvi. She would and she would not	394
xxvii. Job's Will	401
xxviii. The Frolic	405
xxix. The Scrape	408
Quintain, The. By ROBERT MACGREGOR	313
Récamier, Madame. By CHARLES HERVEY	443
Royal Academy, In the. By AUSTIN DOBSON	421
Shakespeare's Nightingale. By CUTHBERT BEDE	424
Spring's Gifts. By A. H. JAPP	321
Story of a Statue, The. By C. TREVELYAN MACAULAY	207
Tourist's Notes, A.: Barbison	206
Unrequited Attachment, An. By JAMES PAYN	332
Views from a German Spion. By BRET HARTE	412

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	DRAWN BY		
'He pulled all manner of things from the cupboards'	<i>A. Hopkins</i>	Frontispiece	
'I came to meet you'	"	To face p.	109
'Can you tell me if Miss Holt is about?'	"	"	149
'Oh, Mr. Fielding, don't mind him'	"	"	252
'Why, this is never Clarkson?'	"	"	285
'Polly laid her hand on Job's shoulder'	"	"	375
'Polly took a reaping-hook, and cut the first sheaf'	"	"	394
Claudia Lemuel at Home	"	"	484

BELGRAVIA.

MARCH 1879.

Donna Quixote.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

CHAPTER VII.

GABRIELLE'S GUESTS.

A BENEVOLENT person once, so goes the story, invited a beggar from the streets to share a meal with him. He gave the beggar rich meats and dry wines, dessert of rarest fruits, cigars and coffee that might have satisfied any frequenter of the *Café Anglais*. A week after, the beggar met him and put in a plea for a similar banquet. Being denied, he denounced his former entertainer as one who had only given him a tantalising taste for good things, which was never more to be gratified in this life. 'Was I not happy,' the aggrieved mendicant exclaimed, 'before I ever knew that there were things so delightful to be had as turtle soup and dry champagne?'

It is much to be feared that Gabrielle Vanthorpe with the best of motives was entertaining Robert Charlton with turtle and champagne. Not that these delicacies really were produced this evening when he and his wife took tea in the old-fashioned way with Mrs. Vanthorpe. Gabrielle modelled the little entertainment as much as possible after the fashion to which she knew they were accustomed, lest they, or he at least, might fancy that she was treating them like a patroness. But she was unconsciously feeding poor Robert on a fare to which he was wholly unaccustomed, and which he was not likely to have set before him very often. She talked to him with such friendly, kindly ease; she drew him out so delicately on the subjects he best understood; she deferred with such an appearance of sincerity—indeed it was sincerity and not appearance—to his opinion on many things; she entered with such intelligence into all the political and other questions of

general interest he touched upon : that Charlton felt as if he were taken by some sudden magic out of his own hard narrow world with its petty amusements, and its broken glimpses at knowledge, into some delightful sphere where beautiful women enhanced the charm of their beauty by talking like rational men, Mrs. Vanthorpe had a great many books and engravings to show him, and he talked with much intelligence about them and could tell her many things which she did not know and was glad to learn. She took a genuine pleasure in talking to him, and most of the evening passed agreeably for her. She had her heart set all the time on winning his confidence so thoroughly that he would be at last found willing to take her advice, and then she would talk to him about Janet and make him ashamed of his nonsense, and teach him a true appreciation of his wife and of woman in general, and so make happy for ever the life of the poor fair one with locks of gold.

Janet enjoyed the evening to the full as much as her husband did, although in a different way. She had ever since their marriage been accustomed to sink herself so entirely in him that in order to enjoy anything it was only necessary for her to know that he was enjoying it. They had had no children, and, as often happens with a young pair in such case, the protecting maternal sentiment closes around the husband and makes him its object. Janet was proud to see Robert able to talk to a lady of education like Mrs. Vanthorpe, and she anticipated nothing but good from the intervention of one so kind and clever and generous.

The one of the little company who least enjoyed the evening, or rather indeed who did not enjoy it at all, was Miss Elvin. That young lady very quickly found out the social position of Mr. and Mrs. Charlton, and was exceedingly wroth at the idea of being set down to pass an evening with them. She would have liked Mr. Taxal, or some one of that class ; but she bitterly resented in her mind the thought of being called upon to amuse people like the Charltons. Gabrielle of course asked her to sing, assuming that she would like to be asked, and afraid that the girl would think her gifts slighted if she were not called upon to display them. Most assuredly if Miss Elvin had not been asked to sing she would have nourished in her mind a very grievous sense of wrong. But now that she was asked, she considered it a great piece of impertinence on the part of Mrs. Vanthorpe to invite her to sing for such people as the Charltons. She received Janet's raptures and Robert's somewhat slow and pedantic dissertations of praise with an air of indifference which he must have observed if he were not thinking so much of himself, and which Janet would

probably have noticed only that she hardly ever thought of herself. Gabrielle, whose habit was to interpret everything to everybody's advantage, ascribed the girl's manner to shyness or the sensitiveness of genius, or some such cause not easily to be understood by common people. In truth, the young aspirant's bosom was already swelling with anger against her unconscious hostess, who was only thinking how she could best help her and please her. Miss Elvin set down Gabrielle as a self-conceited purse-proud spoilt favourite of fortune, who despised Gertrude Elvin because she was only a struggling artist, and deliberately sought to convey to her the conviction that she was only good enough to sit down with Charltons and people of that sort. Were it not for the valuable aid she expected to derive from Gabrielle's patronage, the girl would have indulged in some burst of open ill-humour. But she thought, amid whatever sense of injury, that it would be very convenient to be occasionally asked to stay at Gabrielle's house. She and her brother lived out Camberwell way, and she saw herself in her mind's eye writing letters bearing date from Mrs. Vanthorpe's more fashionable quarter. Nor did she forget Lady Honeybell, and the thought of how very agreeable it would be to be conveyed to Lady Honeybell's in Mrs. Vanthorpe's carriage. Still more perhaps did her thoughts dwell on Walter Taxal, whom she knew to be the son of a lord, and on whom it was not absolutely impossible that the attractions of a gifted artist who believed herself far from unlovely might work some little impression. Already she was longing for the next day, which was to bring the promised visit of Mr. Taxal and perhaps some good new from Lady Honeybell. All these considerations induced Miss Elvin to 'put up,' as she would herself have expressed it, with a good deal of what she would have called the 'airs' of her hostess; although she could not humour those airs to the extent of manifesting the slightest interest in people like the Charltons.

Gabrielle saw during her talk with Robert Charlton that the young singer seemed rather weary and moody, and that she and Janet were apparently not able to carry on any conversation between themselves or to join in a general talk. She went over to Miss Elvin, who was affecting to look into a music-book at the other end of the room.

'I am afraid you are tired, Miss Elvin; or lonely. We ought not to have asked you to sing; it must have fatigued you.'

'Oh, thank you, no,' Miss Elvin said graciously. 'I am a little lonely, perhaps, without my brother. I so seldom go out alone, I hardly know myself without him.'

'I am so sorry,' Gabrielle said quite penitently; 'I ought to

have known, I ought not to have asked you to stay. You must forgive me; I never had a brother, and I did not remember for the moment how lonely one must feel without such a companionship when one is used to it.'

This, however, was by no means the sentiment which it would have suited Miss Elvin to encourage. Nothing could have been a more complete frustration of her plans and hopes than that Mrs. Vanthorpe should suppose that she and her brother were inseparable.

'Oh, no, it is not that,' she hastened to explain; 'unfortunately, my brother and I have to be only too often separated as it is, Mrs. Vanthorpe. He has to give lessons out of London—in Brighton and other places, and sometimes I don't see him for days and days together. If I were at home now, the chances are that I should be sitting alone there. Oh, no, it was not that I meant. What I meant to say was that here in this charming house of yours, made so welcome by your kindness and so happy, it seems a sad thing that he should not be here too; that he should be away, working perhaps with uncongenial people for a living.'

'Ah, yes; I can quite understand that,' Gabrielle said softly. 'If I had a brother I am sure I should feel as you do. There can be no friend like a brother.'

'Pardon me, Mrs. Vanthorpe; you could hardly be expected to feel as I do. You could hardly have the occasion. If you had a brother he would be a gentleman of fortune; he would not be going about the world giving fencing-lessons for a living. You would not be going to face the great cold hard world, to expose yourself to slight and reproach, to fail perhaps.'

'You will not fail, I know; I am sure. We shall hail your complete success before long—and see how young you are! We are all sure of your success. Mr. Charlton understands a great deal about music, and he has just been telling me that he never heard such a voice as yours.'

Miss Elvin's anxiety to please her patroness could not carry her farther than to express with the very slightest bend of her head an acknowledgment of praise coming from a person like Mr. Charlton.

'But the gentleman who was here to-day,' she said—'when I sang. He was not very sanguine. He said all he could to please you, Mrs. Vanthorpe; but it was easily to be seen that he was by no means hopeful. My brother, I fear, spoils me with his praise; he is so sanguine and he is so fond of me.'

'But I assure you Mr. Taxal is much more hopeful than he

seems ; only he thinks it right to guard against giving too much hope for fear of disappointment. He told me so, when we talked of you before he went.'

'You were kind enough to talk to him about me?' Miss Elvin said, turning the full light of her anxious eyes on Gabrielle, and delighted to hear that she had been the subject of conversation.

'Yes, of course we did ; what else should we have talked of then? And he told me he thought it right always to guard against saying too much ; I suppose he does wisely in that, but I confess it is not my way, Miss Elvin. When I feel enthusiasm I must let it be seen ; but others of course are different. You may trust to his championship all the same.'

'I know that he will try to do anything you ask him, Mrs. Vanthorpe ; indeed, who would not? Whatever may come, I shall owe all to you.'

Miss Elvin had grown suddenly very curious on one point. Was Mr. Taxal an admirer of Mrs. Vanthorpe? Was there any probability that she would marry him? Her brother had given her to understand that Mrs. Vanthorpe had suffered so much grief at her husband's death that she never could think of marrying again ; but Miss Elvin was convinced that she knew exactly what value to set on womanly resolves of that kind. She thought there was something in the devotedness of Taxal's manner that suggested a love-making and a possible engagement ; and it would be of very great importance for her to know whether there was any ground for this impression. She made up her mind that she would find out something on that head before she committed herself in any way either to Mrs. Vanthorpe or to Mr. Taxal. So, being a very clever little person as well as a great artist—clever, that is, when her moods of selfishness and ill-humour did not get the better of her judgment—she set herself to extract the supposed secret from Gabrielle.

'I have sung more than once to please myself and to please others to-night, dear Mrs. Vanthorpe—may I not now sing something to please you?'

The manner of the singer was particularly propitiatory and winning. She had seated herself in a suppliant attitude beside Gabrielle on a sofa, shrinking as it were beneath her protecting shadow and looking up to her with all her eyes. Now, Gabrielle was one of those rarest of beings—a heroine who did not know much about music. For musical performances in general she did not even care. Long, long hours of delight had she passed in listening even to such poor music and such poor singing

as her own. There were times and moods when one chance chord of a piano wafted to her ears; one sound of the trumpet across the park from the barracks; ay, even one bar on an old hurdy-gurdy, odious and insufferable to the cultivated—would set all her pulses thrilling as if with the deepest influence of music. Often had she in one sound drunk in the full sense of that exquisite saying of Richter's hero about the music which speaks of things that in all our lives we have not found and shall never find. But for set musical performances, more especially of the severe and classic order, she had, it must be owned, rather a languid ear. So when Miss Elvin thus gracefully entreated her, she had the misfortune to respond to the invitation by replying that she should be delighted above all things to hear any of the early English or Irish or Scottish ballads—any that Miss Elvin pleased—she loved all of them that she knew, and was sure she should love to hear any one that Miss Elvin might happen to sing. Alas! Miss Elvin never sang that sort of music; oh, never. It did not suit her voice at all. She was so sorry; but she never could sing music like that; in fact, her brother would not wish her to do so, as he feared it would spoil her style.

‘But I wish to sing something for you,’ she said imploringly, ‘something specially for you. Is there anything Mr. Taxal particularly loves? Perhaps as you are such friends you might have a preference for something he likes?’

‘I don't think I have the least idea of what Mr. Taxal likes,’ Gabrielle said. ‘I have not seen him for a long time until very lately; until I asked him to come here and talk about you. I fancy he would think my taste in music barbarous, as you do, I am sure, Miss Elvin,’ said Gabrielle, not at all annoyed, but, on the contrary, highly amused. ‘Sing whatever you like yourself; whatever belongs to your style. I shall be sure to like it; and I hope we shall get you a far more appreciative audience before long.’

This was not, perhaps, a very happy way of putting a singer into great good humour. Miss Elvin performed a song at Gabrielle; it could not be said that she sang. Then she rose from the piano and made a pretty little bow to Gabrielle, as if to say, ‘I have now performed my act of fealty.’ She regarded herself simply as a martyr. Miss Elvin would have judged of Julius Cæsar, Michael Angelo, Queen Elizabeth, or Madame de Staël, by his or her capacity to appreciate singing; that is to say, the singing of Miss Elvin.

The little company did not blend; it was, if such an illustration may be used, mixed but not compounded. Each of the two guests

who would talk at all wanted to talk only to Gabrielle. Robert Charlton was happy to the very fulness of comfort while she talked with him. Her words made him feel clever and eloquent. When she turned to speak to Miss Elvin or to Janet, he fell under a pall of silence and began to turn over the leaves of illustrated books. While Gabrielle was speaking with him, Miss Elvin openly took refuge in music-books or photographs. The singer cared nothing about such art as Charlton understood. Charlton would just then have been sorely bored by the music of St. Cecilia.

Gabrielle fancied that Janet must be lonely, having so little to do with any conversation that there was. She resolutely told Robert Charlton to talk to Miss Elvin for a little, and she drew Janet into particular conversation with herself. She was anxious, too, to get some account of Janet's fellow-lodgers; to hear about Mr. Lefussis, who was poor, and whom it might be possible in some way to help; and about Mr. Fielding. Janet opined that Lefussis was very poor; but she believed he was proud, and she did not exactly see her way to doing anything much for him of that sort. He made her laugh, poor Mr. Lefussis, Janet said. She had often seen him openly mending his old coat as she passed by his room, and she had seen him blackening the seams with ink. Mr. Fielding? well, she did not fancy Mr. Fielding was particularly well off; but he certainly appeared to have money to spend sometimes; and then he always spent it, Janet thought. How did she know? Well, Robert told her; but besides she had known him to do ever so many kind things for lodgers who were in difficulty. There was a poor man died in the second floor of the next house; and Mr. Fielding gave the servant in Janet's house a letter for the widow, and she wasn't to say whom it came from; and the servant did not say, but she waited to see it opened, and the poor widow found there was nothing but a ten-pound note in it. The lady who had the house where Janet lived told her that Mr. Fielding was always doing kind things for her, and for her little girls, and for everybody, when he had the opportunity. Janet began to talk so much about Fielding that Gabrielle feared Mr. Charlton might hear what his good-natured little wife was saying, and wholly misinterpret the nature of her enthusiasm. Partly for this reason and partly because for motives of her own she was pleased to have heard so good an account of Fielding, she began to speak of his appearance with a certain admiration, and to say that she had been rather taken by his manner. Suddenly Robert Charlton, who had been trying very unsuccessfully to carry on a conversation with Miss Elvin, and who had had all the difficulties of the task hideously aggravated by his desire to hear what Gabrielle and his wife were

saying, broke off abruptly in his attentions to the singer and turned to Mrs. Vanthorpe.

‘You were talking of that man Fielding, Mrs. Vanthorpe? I don’t know what to make of him; I sometimes think he is not all right; I have been telling Janet to avoid him.’

There was something in his manner which Gabrielle, for all her good nature, thought unpleasant and presuming.

‘I know nothing about the gentleman,’ she said coldly; ‘but he appears to me to be a gentleman. I was saying so to your wife. She was afraid I might have supposed him to be rather rude in manner; but I did not.’

‘I don’t know what he does for a living; nor where he gets any money,’ Charlton went on with malice awkwardly disguised. ‘The worst thing about being poor and living in a place like that, Mrs. Vanthorpe, is that it compels one to associate with people of whom one knows nothing.’

Gabrielle did not continue this talk; but turned to Miss Elvin, who was now sulking in a corner, and said something to her. The little evening hardly recovered the introduction of Fielding’s name. Gabrielle thought Charlton looked curiously mean and vulgar while he was endeavouring to insinuate something vague against the young man in Bolingbroke Place. Charlton was angry with himself because he thought he had displeased Gabrielle; even Janet felt that the atmosphere of the evening had grown less genial. Gabrielle’s well-meant hospitality was not turning out a great success. She was a little disappointed herself, and was rather glad when her two guests went away; although she again assured Janet in friendly whispers that she would never fail Janet’s cause until full success had crowned her efforts.

Robert Charlton hardly spoke a word to his wife all the way home. As they got to the threshold of their dismal house in Bolingbroke Place he said to her abruptly:—

‘There seems no light in that fellow’s windows; I wonder where he can be at this hour?’

‘Mr. Fielding?’

‘Yes; Mr. Fielding, as you call him.’

Janet did not venture upon suggesting that that was probably the right way to call him; at least, that it was the only way known to her.

‘Who knows what the fellow’s name is?’ Charlton fiercely asked. ‘Who knows what he is? I am sure there is something bad about him. People ought to be warned against him.’

They were now in the house, and actually at the door of the little sitting-room which Fielding occupied. Robert had let him-

self in with a latch-key ; a privilege almost necessarily allowed to lodgers in that house. He tried the door of Fielding's room and found it unlocked. He turned the handle, opened the door, and in spite of Janet's shrinking back and her whispered protest he stepped into the room, dragging her with him. It was not quite dark. The faintest gleam of soft light was burning in Fielding's antique lamp.

'Halloa !' a voice exclaimed ; and Fielding struggled up from a recumbent position on the sofa.

Janet started and almost screamed.

'Oh ! so you are in, then ?' Charlton said a little confusedly. 'I wasn't certain ; so I just looked in to see as we were passing. But we must not disturb you.'

'Come, I say,' Fielding said cheerily ; 'you did not look in, you know, just to gaze upon this manly form ? I am sure Mrs. Charlton didn't, anyhow.'

'Oh !' exclaimed Janet in horrified protest against the very idea of such a thing.

'Of course not ; I said so, you know. No, Charlton, my boy, you looked in hoping to find me here, that you and I might have a midnight talk together ; and here I am. I wasn't sleeping ; only lying on the sofa and thinking out all manner of things. I am so glad you came, you two. The room was getting to be quite filled with ghosts ; yes, Mrs. Charlton, ghosts as thick as leaves in that awful place that people quoted until we all got sick of it. Now you two good fellows have come and the ghosts are all gone ! Look here'—he turned on the light of his lamp until it burned with a warm and cheerful glow. 'Now we'll have some supper. I never had the pleasure of catching Janet—I mean, of course, Mrs. Robert Charlton—in my humble dwelling before ; and she isn't going now until she helps us first to get and then to eat some supper. Charlton, my good fellow, there's yet some liquor left ; there's more of that Burgundy. I say, how glad I am that you two have come !'

So he went talking and rattling on in what seemed to be a genuine reaction of high animal spirits after loneliness and depression. He rushed about : he arranged and disarranged the tables and the chairs ; insisted on Janet taking off her bonnet and lending a hand in the preparations ; pulled all manner of things to eat and drink from cupboards ; and in fact made the dull old room waken up and grow lively under the influence of his genial humour and good nature. Janet was at first utterly puzzled as to how to conduct herself. She was afraid that if she lent herself in the slightest to the uncereemonious ways of Fielding, she would be

laying up endless stores of jealousy and offence to be treasured against her in her husband's mind. But, to her surprise, Robert seemed, after his first confusion, to be doing his best to fall into the humour of the thing.

'Come, Janet,' he said peremptorily, 'help Mr. Fielding. He is only a poor bachelor, you know, and a good-natured woman might lend him a hand to show him how to spread a cloth.'

Nothing could give Janet more pleasure than to be helpful and friendly to any one. She only wanted the permission. But as she bustled about the room, and was good-humouredly pushed here and there by Fielding, and called by her Christian name quite as often as not, and Robert Charlton stood by and made no remonstrance at anything, but was evidently resolved to be in the friendliest mood, she certainly did wonder at the changing ways of men; and she could only fancy that the magic of Mrs. Vanthorpe's sweet influence must be already beginning to work, and that Robert was being cured of his ill-humours and his jealousy. They sat down at last to a pleasant little supper, and Janet was made to have some of the delicious Burgundy, which she was not able to admire, honestly thinking it sour and detestable.

'And so you have been in the glittering halls of fashion?' Fielding asked. 'Come, tell us all about it. You Peris who have been within the portals, tell a poor devil shut out what Paradise is like.'

'Lefussis was there,' Charlton said.

'He was going away when we came,' Janet hastened to explain. 'There was a delightful singer there, Mr. Fielding.'

'Was there really? How much I should have liked to hear him; what did he sing? Anything nice from the music-halls?'

'Oh, for shame, Mr. Fielding, to think of Mrs. Vanthorpe having anything from the music-halls! And it wasn't a he at all; it was a young lady.'

'I shouldn't have cared for any young lady, were she another St. Cecilia, while that beautiful Mrs. Vanthorpe was there—and while Janet was there; Mrs. Robert Charlton, of course, I mean. With two such in presence, what care I for singers? The talk of some women is far above singing.'

'Mrs. Vanthorpe looked lovely,' Janet affirmed.

'If one could only see her,' Fielding went on; 'but she does not invite me. I think I'll go and take my stand outside her door every day. She must come out sometimes.'

'You need not do all that,' Janet said in great good spirits. 'If you go to the concert at Lady Honeybell's next Friday she is sure to be there; she is going with the lady who sings.'

Fielding entered perhaps half in jest and certainly half in earnest into the whole question of the concert: where and when it was to be, and whether admission was to be by payment. Then they talked of other things, and a pleasant hour was passed away. Janet thought she had never spent so free and happy an evening, and she began to hope that a new life was really opening on her.

But when they were alone in their room together her husband suddenly said:—

‘Janet, why did you tell that fellow anything about the concert? What is it to him? What does he want there?’

Janet mistook altogether the source of his objection to Fielding’s going to the concert.

‘Why, Robert, what harm was there in that? We are not going there.’

‘Yes; I think I shall go.’

‘Oh! but anyhow I am not going.’

‘I don’t care about that; I would not have told him anything. I wish you had kept your mouth shut. What business has he going there?’

Janet could not understand her husband’s anger this time. More than once when he was out of humour she had contrived with innocent coquetry to attract his eyes and his admiration to her beautiful hair as she undid it and rearranged it for the night. She tried the pretty stratagem now again. She loosed the golden locks and let them fall around her shoulders; then coiled them up in some new form, and let them fall anew; she made their sunny splendour gleam under his eyes again and again, but all in vain. Her beauty could not draw him out of his ill-humour by a single hair, nor by all its chains of golden hair, that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

‘LADY, DOST THOU NOT FEAR TO STRAY?’

THE next day brought Walter Taxal and glad news to Miss Elvin. Lady Honeybell would be delighted to enrol Miss Elvin among the performers at her concert in aid of the cause of independence in Thibet. The thing had happened in the very luckiest manner. A lady who had promised to sing was unfortunately seized with a sudden illness—could anything be so distressing, and so fortunate?—and Lady Honeybell was just about to rush round town to find a substitute when the opportune Walter Taxal came with his request, and the request was accepted as a benefit and a favour. Lady Honeybell sent the kindest, most

gracious, most flattering invitation to Miss Elvin, of whose brilliant promise she spoke in the highest terms. She had never heard of Miss Elvin before, but she was too delighted at the chance of filling up a place in her programme easily to mince her words of gratitude. Miss Elvin was exalted to the highest degree of self-satisfaction. She had never heard of the politicians who used to thank God that we had a House of Lords ; but had she known that there were such, she was now in the mood to give heartfelt echo to their pious ejaculation. At least she would have thanked Heaven for a House of Lords, because the existence of a House of Lords means the existence of various houses of ladies—ladies like Lady Honeybell, who recognise genius, and are in a position to help it to its bright goal along its somewhat clouded way. After all, Miss Elvin said to herself, it is only the real aristocracy who can understand art, and when they understand can assist it. What did it matter how a person like Mrs. Vanthorpe might think on a question of art? She was not a lady of rank, like Lady Honeybell. The young songstress was in her heart rather angry with Mrs. Vanthorpe. She looked on the patronage of Lady Honeybell not as something got through Mrs. Vanthorpe's means, but as a providential interposition to rescue her from Mrs. Vanthorpe and transfer her to the charge of some patroness really worthy of her genius and her certain fame.

Miss Elvin's grudge against Gabrielle did not, however, go the length of inducing her to hasten her departure from Gabrielle's house. On the contrary, she had painted the distance and the inconveniences of her own modest dwelling so ingeniously and pathetically that Gabrielle was induced to hope she would consent to stay with her at least until the concert was over. Miss Elvin assented with words of demure gratefulness, and with the secret hope that she might next be asked to stay at Lady Honeybell's, and then be in a position to show that self-conceited Mrs. Vanthorpe how little Gertrude Elvin stood in need of her patronage. Miss Elvin was one of the persons who in lofty moods are prone to describe themselves even to themselves by both or all their names. She was always telling herself of what Gertrude Elvin ought to do, or was sure to come to, or had no right to endure.

Meanwhile Gertrude Elvin became for a few days an inmate of Gabrielle's little house, and enjoyed to the very full all its easy luxurious ways—they were indeed luxury to her—and she turned her eyes whenever she had a chance on Walter Taxal, and reminded herself of the number of men of rank who, as she had heard, became charmed with great singers and married them. She had not yet succeeded in arriving at any satisfactory conclusion as to

the nature of Mr. Taxal's sentiments towards Gabrielle; but she was perfectly certain that Gabrielle was doing all she could to secure him for herself. Meanwhile, the girl's company was pleasant to Gabrielle. It took her away from herself. It gave her the sense of doing some good for somebody; and Gabrielle was never at rest unless when she was disturbing herself in somebody's cause. She was grateful to Miss Elvin for allowing her to hold out that helping hand which the girl took without being grateful for it.

'Now, who in the world are Mrs. Lemuel and her daughter?' Gabrielle asked, on the day before the concert, when Walter Taxal had called to make some arrangement or other with Miss Elvin on the part of Lady Honeybell. 'Mr. Taxal, you know everybody—do you know a Mrs. Lemuel who has sent me her card, with "Mrs. Lemuel and her daughter" on it, and is kind enough to wish to see me?'

'Lemuel?' Taxal said. 'An odd name; I do seem to have some association with it; but I can't recollect it just at the moment. Lemuel?—isn't that the name of some one in a book?'

'Lemuel was the name of Gulliver for one,' Gabrielle said. 'Perhaps that is the association you have with it?'

'Gulliver?—is that "Gulliver's Travels"?' Miss Elvin asked. 'I read that book long ago; it is such stuff.'

'No, I was not thinking of that Lemuel,' Walter said; 'I am sure I have some sort of association with the name; and it does seem something like travelling too. Lemuel! Lemuel! What is it?'

The easiest plan appeared to be to see the ladies; and they were accordingly introduced. In her small circle, Gabrielle had become a little talked of as a young woman with a remarkable story, good means, and a generous disposition; and she not seldom received calls from previously unknown ladies, come to ask her aid for all manner of beneficent projects. Mrs. Lemuel proved to be a brisk, wiry little woman, with twinkling eyes that seemed to take in all the four corners of the room at once. Her daughter was thin too, but frail and delicate-looking; and had eyes that twinkled much, but did not rove so briskly and to such purpose as her mother's. Hers was evidently the subjective, her mother's the objective, nature.

'I have taken the liberty to call, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' the elder lady promptly began, 'because we used to live in the neighbourhood at one time, and we may in a measure call ourselves friends, by right of having once been neighbours. We English are usually

so cold—oh, so cold!—and I do not think it right at all. Besides, we have heard of you as of one who delights in doing good; doing good by stealth, you know, and blushing to find it fame; oh, quite blushing to find it fame, I see. You may have heard of me, perhaps? Now, pray don't say you have not. I am not very vain; but still, one does work for fame—a little, that is.'

Gabrielle interposed something about her recent life not having allowed her to know much of what was going on in the world.

'True, true; oh, of course. Let me then explain myself. I am Mrs. Lemuel, the traveller; I think I may venture to call myself *the* traveller. I have just published a short narrative of my visit to the Court of Siam; the papers are kind enough to speak favourably of it; but it was really nothing; quite a little holiday tour. I will ask you to do me the favour to accept a copy of my book 'From Lake Superior to Cape Horn:' the idea, you perceive, being that a woman should travel alone from the north of one America to the south of the other. There was nothing in it but that; it really could hardly be called travelling. I think of doing the same thing for Africa; that will perhaps be a feat worth talking about—to begin, you understand, at Algiers and come out at the Cape of Good Hope. I should dress as a man, of course; I usually dress as a man. Just cut the hair short and dress as a man, and you may go anywhere. You ought to try it, Mrs. Vanthorpe; a woman of your spirit and your youth might be of invaluable service in teaching the world what we poor women can do.'

'Does your daughter go with you?' Gabrielle asked, looking with some wonder at the frail figure, sallow cheeks, and twinkling eyes of Miss Lemuel.

'My daughter? oh, no; she, I am sorry to say, has no taste for travel—no marked taste. She never accompanies me on any great expedition. She believes she has another purpose in life, and of course we cannot all mould our lives to the same end. My daughter teaches.'

'In schools?' Gabrielle was beginning; 'how very good of her! how useful!'

'In schools, Mrs. Vanthorpe! Oh, no; my daughter does not so narrow herself. No; she teaches in her own rooms to those of her sex who will listen. She tries, as far as a girl may do in such restricted times as ours, to imitate Aspasia—no, I don't mean Aspasia, of course; I mean that very delightful and splendid person of whom we read such noble things—oh, Hypatia, of course.'

Gabrielle was attracted more by the daughter than by the mother. She left Mrs. Lemuel to hold Walter Taxal with her glittering eye, seeing that that orb had just fastened upon his; and she turned to Miss Lemuel.

‘I wish you would teach me something, Miss Lemuel,’ she said. ‘I am sure you are doing a good work in the world.’

‘If you please,’ the young lady interrupted, with eyes that seemed almost to start from her head with sheer eagerness, ‘not Miss Lemuel.’

‘I beg your pardon—Miss——?’ for Gabrielle assumed that Mrs. Lemuel had been twice married, and that this was her daughter by her first husband.

‘Claudia Lemuel, if you please. I hold that women are all sisters, and that such vain titles as “Miss” are an offence against their bond of sisterhood. I do not insist on this in the case of any one who really feels otherwise; I should not presume to address you, for example, otherwise than as Mrs. Vanthorpe, if you prefer to adhere to that form; but I request that I may be personally addressed by my name. I am Claudia Lemuel.’

‘Claudia is a charming name; I shall be delighted to call you Claudia. But in the case, say, of Mr. Taxal—how is he to address you?’

‘If he desires to address me,’ Claudia answered with earnest eyes, ‘he must please to call me by my name. My name is Claudia Lemuel; it is not Miss Lemuel.’

‘But do you really think it of much importance to insist on any particular form?’ Gabrielle mildly pleaded.

‘Of the very greatest importance. I have thought of it long and often; it is a question of fundamental truth. Your name is one thing; you are called another: what is that but the beginning of a false relationship between the individual and society? and what can come of a false relationship but falsehood?’

‘Oh!’ was Gabrielle’s observation.

‘I should be so delighted if you would come one day and hear what I have to say to those who will listen,’ Claudia said. ‘I speak to my friends on Sunday afternoons. I do not give lectures or make speeches. I hold women who make speeches in contempt; speechmaking is one of the falsehoods against society that men have invented. I only converse with those who surround me.’

‘I shall be much pleased to come and be instructed by you,’ Gabrielle replied, greatly interested. ‘Do you speak on religious subjects?’

‘I expound my creed.’

‘Your creed—yes? that is?——’

‘Pessimism,’ the maiden said with proud eagerness in her avowal. ‘I am a pessimist. Not of the common school, you will please to understand——.’

‘Of the common school? No; I should have supposed not;’ and Gabrielle could hardly help smiling.

‘No; I do not accept the common doctrine of pessimism at all. In fact, I do not believe that they who undertake to illustrate it really understand it. It is not enough for me to show that everything is ordained for the worst; that is but the beginning; one is only on the threshold then of the great principles which it so concerns women to know. You are not to suppose, either, that that was the doctrine of Schopenhauer, or that I, on the other hand, admit anything that Schopenhauer taught on that or any other subject; but I would have justice done even to one who so sadly failed to comprehend the true doctrine of pessimism as Schopenhauer, and who showed himself so utterly incapable of appreciating the place of woman in the great development of the human universe.’

All this and a great deal more was rattled off with a velocity that almost took Gabrielle’s breath away, and an earnestness that made her feel ashamed that she could not at once throw her own soul into the controversy.

‘Well, you shall teach me all about it, Claudia; I am very ignorant; but, unlike most ignorant people, I think I am really anxious to learn. Do you live with your mother?’

‘My mother can hardly be said to live anywhere,’ the young lady answered; ‘she is at present staying at the Langham Hotel; but she is preparing to go on her travels again. I have lived alone since my father’s death. I have chambers; and two friends attend me. I should say that the friends are persons who would in the common parlance of the world be called maid-servants; I do not call them so; I call them friends.’

Gabrielle began to wonder whether pessimism consisted in calling things by names different from those in common use.

‘You must have found it melancholy living alone so long a time.’

‘Why should I find it melancholy? A man lives in chambers by himself; he is not supposed to be melancholy. Why is a woman to be looked on as less self-reliant and self-sufficing?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Gabrielle. ‘I live alone, in that sense; and I don’t find that I suffer much from my loneliness; but I have not tried it long; and mine is rather a peculiar case. I think if I had a mother I would not live alone.’

‘But if your mother felt that she was called upon to travel through the world?’

‘Ah, then, indeed——,’ said Gabrielle; and she pursued the subject no farther.

‘I am going to give a lecture,’ Mrs. Lemuel suddenly said, turning to Gabrielle: ‘a lecture at St. James’s Hall. I have been asking Mr. Taxal to take the chair. He is so well known as a supporter of every good cause. It is to be called “The Travels of a Lone Woman;” it is to be illustrated with maps and pictures; I thought of something panoramic; but I am afraid I could not work it very well. I would much rather have a woman in the chair, for my part, than even Mr. Taxal. He is too benevolent and will appreciate my motives too well to be offended. It is only for the sake of the cause, Mr. Taxal; to show that we women are not absolutely dependent on you men. Now, if I could prevail on Mrs. Vanthorpe just for once to conquer her congenial modesty, for the sake of a great cause, and take the chair for me——’

‘I am afraid my interest in the cause is not nearly strong enough yet to induce me to do that,’ Gabrielle said. ‘I have no gift of eloquence, Mrs. Lemuel; I should only illustrate woman’s incapacity for public affairs, and so give a handle to the enemies of your cause.’

‘Strange how some women want courage!’ Mrs. Lemuel said contemplatively. ‘If you had travelled alone like me from Lake Superior to Cape Horn!’

‘I think I would rather walk all the way than take the chair at St. James’s Hall,’ said Gabrielle decisively.

‘Strange!’ Mrs. Lemuel again said musingly. ‘But you will come to my lecture?’

‘I will come,’ Gabrielle said—‘if I can.’

‘And Mr. Taxal has promised to take the chair for me?’

‘Oh, no, I didn’t promise,’ Taxal interposed in alarm; ‘I said I would think it over, Mrs. Lemuel. But one has so many things to look after, you know; I may have some engagement; in fact, I am sure I have an engagement that evening.’

‘But I haven’t told you what the evening is to be yet,’ the traveller calmly remarked; ‘and you can’t know that you have an engagement. In fact, I don’t know yet myself what the evening may be. It depends upon when I can have the hall; and all sorts of things.’

This was happily vague, and Taxal began to breathe again.

‘You will come and hear me some Sunday?’ Claudia said with supplicating eagerness.

‘I will come and hear you with pleasure,’ Gabrielle said. She

was quite taken with the pale eager little girl whose mother, drawn by the call of duty, was about to leave her and travel over Africa. Suddenly the concert in aid of the independence of Thibet occurred to Gabrielle's mind; and she asked Claudia to accompany her there. Gabrielle never could keep from offering to do something for any one to whom she felt drawn. The girl delightedly accepted the invitation. Mrs. Lemuel was too closely occupied with the preparations for her own lecture and her travels to attend any such performances. As they were going away, Gabrielle held her hand out to Claudia. The girl hesitated.

'If you wish,' she said timidly. 'If you think it necessary.' She spoke with the manner of one sincerely anxious not to give offence, and yet acting under the influence of some mysterious principle of duty.

'I don't quite understand,' Gabrielle said; 'I only meant to shake hands, Claudia.'

'Yes; but that raises a great question. Why should we shake hands? What real meaning can there be in touching two hands together? It does not insure truth or friendship. It is a form that does not represent a truth; it is therefore a falsehood!' then she coloured, conscious that now the whole of the little company were listening to her.

'Whatever you think right, Claudia,' said Gabrielle, smiling. 'I confess I never looked at it in that serious light before. But I am coming to hear you, and you shall tell me all about it and instruct my ignorance.'

'I shake hands,' Mrs. Lemuel said, holding forth a stout little fist covered with a man's glove. 'I see no infraction of principle in it. My daughter and I do not hold ourselves pledged to each other's creeds. We are independent. We go our own ways.'

'Quite so,' said Gabrielle.

'Was there ever seen such a pair of fools!' Miss Elvin exclaimed the moment the mother and daughter had gone.

'A most dreadful old woman,' Taxal said; 'but I fancy she means well. I remember all about her now. She has really travelled; I knew I had some association with the name.'

'I feel deeply for the daughter,' Gabrielle said earnestly. 'All about her impresses me very much. She has a candid generous face. She must lead a melancholy life—such a life for a girl! I wish I could do something for her.'

'For her too?' Taxal murmured in a low tone.

'I feel greatly interested in her; I am sure she has a good heart. Her very dreams and fads and nonsense seem to claim sympathy for her.'

‘One can’t very well feel sympathy with fools,’ Miss Elvin observed, greatly angered at the thought that this absurd girl was to have a seat in Mrs. Vanthorpe’s carriage on the all-important day of the concert.

CHAPTER IX.

AT A MORNING CONCERT.

LADY HONEYBELL was undoubtedly, as Miss Elvin supposed, a member of the aristocracy. She was the daughter of a Scottish Peer of very ancient family, and she was married to the Earl of Honeybell in the peerage of the United Kingdom. But she did not impress Miss Elvin nearly as much as the singer had expected. She was a bustling, intensely Scotch, and very kindly woman, who went about her drawing-room and tried to make people enjoy themselves on the occasion of the morning concert just as if she had been quite a person of humble class. This was a disappointment to Miss Elvin, who would have liked to find a lady cold, distant, and haughty to other persons, but exquisitely gracious and friendly to Gertrude Elvin. She would have been pleased, for example, if Lady Honeybell had been rather aristocratically repelling in her treatment of Mrs. Vanthorpe. It would have done Gabrielle good, Miss Elvin thought, and taught her to set a proper value upon artists. But Lady Honeybell was immensely friendly to both of them. She was receiving the company rather as if they were her own guests come to five o’clock tea than as the audience of a concert to which she had lent her house and her patronage.

Gabrielle came early, with Miss Elvin and Miss Lemuel. Mr. Taxal was already there to receive them; and Lady Honeybell at once bustled out from a little crowd of friends to greet them, and to introduce herself. She put poor Miss Elvin out, to begin with, by addressing her first and mistaking her for Mrs. Vanthorpe.

‘Eh, my dear young woman,’ the kindly Lady Honeybell said, ‘I’ve heard of your story and I’ve heard of your goodness, and I am glad to see ye.’

Here Mr. Taxal interposed, and explained that that lady was Miss Elvin the singer, and not Mrs. Vanthorpe.

‘Oh, Miss Elvin; to be sure. I hope you’ll forgive me; I didn’t know. We are ever so much indebted to you, Miss Elvin, for coming forward at so short a notice to help us out with our little concert. And this, then, is Mrs. Vanthorpe? I heard of you, Mrs. Vanthorpe, from my old friend Major Leven—a good man if

ever there was one—and from Walter Taxal too. Walter here helps me in all my undertakings, and he has told me about you. This is the first day you have been into any house but your own, he tells me. Well, it is a good cause. You are young to trouble, my dear; but the world is nothing but trouble, they say.’ And then some other arrivals called off the attention of Lady Honeybell, and Miss Elvin did not think that she had got very much personally out of the interview so far.

Lord Honeybell, it should be said, was a high and dry old Whig politician who resented every advance that had been made in anything since the Reform Bill of Lord Grey, and who occupied his mind and his time with statistics about the agricultural peasantry, and the question of local as compared with imperial taxation. He never took the slightest interest in any of his wife’s various tastes and occupations. He never appeared at any of the meetings, concerts, and other performances that went on under Lady Honeybell’s patronage and in her rooms. She was much concerned with new things, and would patronise a new female acrobat if commended to her as a promising person deserving of an honest lady’s introduction. She had been a great spiritualist until the attempt at a too ingenious imposture had roused her robust Scotch common sense into play. She was very fond of helping forward deserving young men in the artistic way, and she loved to see her rooms filled with the pretty faces of girls. She was thoroughly good-hearted, honest, fussy, and whimsical; and she threw her whole soul into each cause or object until it was done with or was supplanted by some other.

The audience soon settled down. Gabrielle sat with Miss Lemuel; Miss Elvin was withdrawn in order that she might take her place among the performers. It was arranged that Mr. Taxal, who was acting as a sort of master of the ceremonies—Lady Honeybell had neither sons nor daughters—should conduct Miss Elvin to Gabrielle’s carriage when the concert was over. Gabrielle had hardly taken her seat when she became aware of the presence of Mr. Fielding.

He had come in a little late, and did not at first see his way to a seat. But he moved all through the rooms with complete self-possession until he had found a place.

During the performance Gabrielle had full opportunity of studying the features and expression of Mr. Fielding, and she made good use of her time. He was an object of peculiar interest to her, and she had never before had more than a glimpse of him. It was the conviction of Gabrielle Vanthorpe, as it is the conviction of nearly all persons with quick imaginations and of a good

many who have slow imaginations or no imaginations at all, that she had great power of reading the character in the face. As she studied Mr. Fielding's face, neglecting for the purpose many fine exhibitions of musical talent, she came to the certain conclusion that he was a man who had a story behind him. He was still very young, and yet on his face there were melancholy lines which told of more than mere study or reflection or any of the other causes that sometimes cast a shadow over the purple tints of youth. Gabrielle thought she read the evidences of very varied emotions on that dark mobile face. There were traces there, it seemed to her, of passion and of suffering; perhaps of repentance. The moment he looked up at anything the face all brightened, the soft glance of the dark eyes had a gleam of kindly humour in it; there was something almost sunny in the whole expression. But when Fielding looked down the evening shadows appeared to come over his face again. It did not escape Gabrielle's notice that he was every now and then looking furtively and with a certain anxious keenness round the hall, either as if he were in expectation of the coming of some one for whom he waited: or, for Gabrielle thought it might be read either way, as if he were in fear of the entrance of some one by whom he might be recognised.

He was a gentleman certainly, Gabrielle now said to herself. This was made clear to her in various ways as well as by the whiteness of his hand which she could see. Despite the occasional glance round the room, there was an ease and grace in his whole demeanour, in the very way of his entering the room and taking his seat, and every movement he made, that showed him to belong to the class which Gabrielle admitted to be that of a gentleman. Janet Charlton was right on that point, and Gabrielle felt now that she had snubbed her somewhat rashly and unjustifiably. Was he poor? surely he must be poor, to inhabit a house like that in Bolingbroke Place with some of its lodgers for his associates. If he were very poor, how did he come to throw away his money on the concert at Lady Honeybell's? So resolute were the promoters of that entertainment to contribute something solid towards the cause of Thibetan independence, that they had made it a determination—so Mr. Taxal had told her—not to give away one single ticket except to the singers and instrumentalists who had offered their services gratuitously in the great cause. Mr. Fielding, then, who lodged in a small room in Bolingbroke Place, must have paid away a guinea for that day's entertainment; and it was clear to Gabrielle that he, like herself, was not listening to the music.

For a moment her attention was drawn away, wholly drawn away, from her study of Fielding by seeing that Major Leven and his wife were among the audience. Mrs. Leven was dressed in deep mourning still. Her black dress and that of Gabrielle were two sombre spots darkling among all the bright colours of the room, and seeming to mark out these two women in rivalry or community of gloom. It was hardly possible for any eyes to rest upon the one without immediately after singling out the other. 'Are we not enclosed in a common sorrow?' Gabrielle asked herself—'and ought we not to be enclosed in a common sympathy and affection?' She thought with a certain penitent feeling that she had not been so much absorbed in her sorrow as she ought to have been. The face of Albert's mother was wrought into the deepest evidences of mourning. 'Why have we come here at all, we two women with the one trouble?' Gabrielle thought; 'we should be away from a crowd like this, and sympathetic and together.' Mrs. Leven, she assumed, had come at the urgency of her husband, in whose mind it was of far more importance to do the slightest good for any living cause than to remain at home and mourn for the dead. Gabrielle felt the same persuasion; but she could not say that any course of deliberate reflection and decision had induced her to come out in public. Assuredly she could not even pretend to herself that enthusiasm for the cause of the independence of Thibet had impelled her. So she felt almost like some one detected in wrong-doing by the presence of Mrs. Leven. She would have liked to put herself in Mrs. Leven's way and make an appeal once more to the memories of that old affection which surely could not all be dead as yet, and she would not have refrained from doing this out of any mere dread of something approaching to a scene. But she saw that Mrs. Leven's eyes had rested for a moment on her, and that Mrs. Leven's face became more rigid and chilling in its expression than before. 'She still lays Albert's death to my door,' Gabrielle thought; and the thought sent a shudder through her.

Mr. Fielding, too, was looking at Mrs. Leven. He had perhaps noticed that Gabrielle was looking that way, and followed the direction of her eyes; or he had been drawn by one figure in mourning to look at the other. But now he is looking with evident interest or curiosity on Mrs. Leven's face, and Gabrielle is absorbed in conjecture as to what he sees there. Has he any knowledge of who she is? and, if so, has he any profound and personal interest in studying the changes time had made in her? All Gabrielle's fancies about him came upon her, and she was thrilled through with anxiety and suspense. Certainly Fielding looked

long enough at Mrs. Leven to justify Gabrielle's wonder, and now Mrs. Leven looked up and saw him. He turned his eyes away, but Mrs. Leven appeared to look at him in a wondering and anxious way. Could it be, Gabrielle thought, that she fancies she recognises some trace of a once dear and familiar face? Then Gabrielle began to puzzle herself by thinking whether Fielding could ever have been like Albert Vanthorpe; and though she could not trace any hint of possible resemblance, yet she tried to persuade herself that she could see a certain resemblance in the clear and somewhat delicate outlines of Fielding's face to the cold and melancholy beauty—for it still might be called beauty—of Mrs. Leven. In short, our very fanciful heroine was making up for herself a marvellous romance even as she sat there, and was beginning to be possessed by it, as people, whose alarmed fancy tells them of a startling sound, may brood upon the imagining until their ears seem actually to ring with it and to follow every vibration and echo as though such sound were in the air all around them.

Gabrielle's companion had rather a dull time of it if she was not wholly absorbed in the music or in the cause of Thibet; for Gabrielle never interchanged even a whispered word with Miss Lemuel during the whole time since she had become aware of the presence of Mr. Fielding. She did indeed awake to attentiveness each time that Miss Elvin came out to sing. The first time Gabrielle saw her led out to the front of the platform, our heroine positively trembled with excitement and forgot all about Mr. Fielding for the moment. She was probably far more excited than the young singer, who showed that serene confidence before the event which is only born of self-conceit, and which so often gives place to mere depression after. Miss Elvin's voice rang through the room; almost appeared to threaten the safety of the window panes, like a tropical shower of hail. The singer certainly made herself the object of attention and even for a moment of alarm. At first it might have seemed as if she were likely to carry the audience by storm. But after a few seconds the sensation of novelty and alarm died away; and the voice appeared to have only monotonous power. Those who had been startled into sudden and novel interest subsided again and became languid and forgot all about it. Miss Elvin went off with but slight applause; in fact, most of the audience did not know that her performance was coming to an end; and it was impossible to say whether she had succeeded or failed. Gabrielle's heart sank. She returned to her study of Fielding.

The concert had two parts, and Miss Elvin had a second

chance, and did better than the first time. She began with a less tempestuous display of power, and she brought the listeners up to her, so that the effect came at the end rather than at the beginning. A display of mere strength of voice at the end of a song will always carry away a certain portion of any audience, and Miss Elvin had the full benefit of this peculiarity. She received a good deal of applause when she went off the second time, and she had accomplished at least so much that people asked who was the girl with the loud voice? and was she the same girl who sang the song in the first part? Gabrielle had the advantage of hearing some of the comments, and of satisfying herself that there is no recognition of abstract laws of beauty among a modern audience. For many spoke of Miss Elvin as decidedly pretty, others as 'quite too lovely,' some as horribly ugly, some as a plain little thing, and some simply as the girl with the mouth. On the whole, an expert would have said that Miss Elvin's appearance had neither been success nor positive failure; that she had not made a hit, but that she had left it uncertain whether or not she might make it yet. Gabrielle was now only troubled to know how the singer herself would take it.

The concert was over at last, and the audience were melting away. Gabrielle was anxious to avoid crossing the path of Mrs. Leven, and she could not hasten away without waiting for Miss Elvin. The crowd was very great for the size of the room, and there were many recognitions of friends and stoppings to speak to acquaintances and exchanging opinions about the concert and about various other things, not apparently including in any instance the fate of the movement for the independence of Thibet, and Gabrielle suddenly found herself cut off from one of the doors and close to Mr. Fielding.

Of course she might have passed on without seeming to know him. No rule of courtesy bound her to the recognition of a man whom she had seen only once or twice and then in the most casual way, without any ceremony of introduction having been gone through between them. Or she might have recognised him with a quiet inclination of the head and passed on. But in truth Gabrielle had not the slightest wish to get out of the acquaintance. She wanted rather to get into the acquaintance. So she bowed in the most inviting way as he drew close to the wall to let her pass, and she liked the frank brightness of his smile in return.

'We have met before,' Gabrielle said, stopping with her companion and letting the crowd go by; 'Mr. Fielding, I think?'

'I had the honour of opening the door for you,' Fielding said,

entirely unembarrassed; 'you would have been there until now, I fancy, if I had not done so.'

'You are a great lover of music, I suppose, Mr. Fielding?'

'Oh, dear no; don't care about it at all—I mean, about this sort of music. I hate amateur work in anything.'

'You did not come here for the music, then?'

'No, I don't suppose any one did.'

'Then you were attracted by the cause?'

'The cause, Mrs. Vanthorpe? What cause?'

Gabrielle felt sure he pronounced the name of Vanthorpe with a certain hesitation, almost a tremulousness, as if it were charged with some peculiar emotion.

'The cause of the independence of Thibet.'

'I didn't even know that the concert had anything to do with a cause, and I don't know anything about Thibet. Who cares about Thibet? I am sure I don't care if it never was independent. What does it want to be independent of?'

'Really I don't know,' Gabrielle said. 'I dare say this young lady is better instructed. What is Thibet to be independent of, Claudia?'

'Oh, I don't know; I do so wish I knew!' Claudia exclaimed with all her usual eagerness about everything. 'I am sure Mamma must know; she knows all about Thibet and every far-off place. I do so wish I had thought of asking her. But my own interests are so different from those of Thibet; I am so absorbed in my own pursuits.'

'I only came here,' Gabrielle explained, 'to hear Miss Elvin sing. Perhaps you came for the same reason, Mr. Fielding?'

'Miss Elvin? The girl with the dark skin and the large mouth? No, I think her singing is horrible; she is all airs and affectation.'

'Oh, no, nothing of the kind.'

'Anyhow, I don't care for the screech-owl style.'

'I am deeply interested in her. I want her to succeed beyond all things.'

'So do I now,' Fielding gravely said.

'No, you do not; you can't; you said she sang in the screech-owl style.'

'I have changed my opinion,' he observed as gravely as before.

Gabrielle did not like this way of looking at things, and would have drawn out of the conversation altogether if it were not that she had a motive for carrying it on.

'May I have the honour of seeing you to your carriage,' he asked, 'if you are not waiting for any one?'

Before Gabrielle could answer she found the colour rushing to her face and her eyes growing dim. Close beside her, forced by the departing crowd into actual contact with her, were Major and Mrs. Leven. Major Leven held his hand out to her, and said a friendly word or two before the crowd bore him on. Mrs. Leven looked fixedly at Gabrielle and then at Fielding, and passed on without a word. The agitation of Gabrielle must have been apparent to her companions.

‘Do you know that lady?’ she said to Fielding, without waiting to consider what she was saying.

‘No, I do not know her; but I saw her to-day before, and her face interested me.’

Gabrielle fixed her eyes upon him.

‘That lady,’ she said in a low tone and with some emphasis, ‘is Major Leven’s wife; before she married him she was Mrs. Vanthorpe.’

Undoubtedly the news struck Fielding with something like surprise.

‘That Mrs. Vanthorpe, then, is the Mrs. Vanthorpe—is she long married?’

‘Not much more than a year. You had heard of her before this?’

‘Yes. I had heard of her.’ He was looking in the direction the Levens had taken; he was trying to see Mrs. Leven through the crowd. Then he turned round to Gabrielle and begged her pardon as if he had forgotten to answer something she had said. Gabrielle was inclined to murmur, ‘Oh, my prophetic soul!’

He renewed his offer to see her to the carriage, and they went down the stairs. On the way he said suddenly:—

‘May I ask what is the relationship between that lady and you? Pray excuse me if I seem at all rude; but I have a reason.’

‘Her son was my husband; he is dead.’

‘I ought not to have asked such a question,’ he said very earnestly. There was a silence as they went down the stairs. In the minds of both was one common desire, impelled by very different motives. He was trying to get some opportunity or excuse for seeing her again; she was trying to invent some decent pretext for asking him to see her again. She could not, under the eyes and ears of Miss Lemuel, ask him directly what he knew of the name of Vanthorpe, and why it seemed to have some peculiar associations for him. Suddenly he said:—

‘Will you excuse me if I speak of that lady again. She had another son?’

‘She had another son; I hope she has still.’

‘Does she hope so?’

At that moment Robert Charlton suddenly appeared among the crowd at the door, and, seeing Fielding and Gabrielle, made a bow to her and hastened away looking very pale and out of humour. Gabrielle also saw Walter Taxal escorting Miss Elvin towards her. There was no possibility of any explanation with Fielding now.

‘Mr. Fielding,’ she said in a hurried whisper, ‘it seems to me that you have said too much or too little. I want to hear something more from you about this other son of Mrs. Vanthorpe—I mean, of Mrs. Leven.’ She was already answering the smile and bow of Mr Taxal, who was hurrying up with Miss Elvin leaning on his arm and looking gloomy and out of sorts. Fielding made his bow and was gone.

Lady Honeybell’s house was in Piccadilly. Fielding lounged along the street in the direction of Hyde Park, partly, perhaps, because he knew that in that direction lay Gabrielle’s house. He was tormenting himself as he walked slowly on with the thought that he had made an idiot of himself; that he had got into a difficulty from which there was no easy way of getting out; that he had, indeed, to use Gabrielle’s words, said too much or too little. An hour before he would have done almost anything for a chance of speaking to her again; and now he began to dread the idea of having to speak to her again. ‘Were there ever such eyes?’ he thought. ‘Was there ever such a sweet, unaffected, noble creature? was there ever such a soul?’ The impartial reader may perhaps wonder which of Gabrielle’s few and not very striking observations filled this intelligent young man with the conviction that she had ‘such a soul;’ but conviction comes as quickly as gospel light when it beams from soft bright eyes; seeing is indeed believing then. Aladdin had only seen the lovely princess once when he became convinced of her all-goodness as well as her all-loveliness; he had not even spoken to her. Fielding looked back upon many episodes of his own life which in their way he had thought bold and delightful adventures; and he hated the memory of them. The very impulse which had brought him to Lady Honeybell’s in the hope of seeing Gabrielle seemed now something to be ashamed of as selfish, intrusive, and mean.

‘You saw Gabrielle, Constance?’ Major Leven said to his wife, as they were settled in their carriage and going home.

‘Yes, I saw her.’

‘I wish you had spoken to her, dear; it will do nothing but harm, that sort of thing. I do think, Constance, you might have spoken to her and let all this foolish quarrel come to an end. You don’t know what harm you may be doing.’

‘Excuse me, George; I don’t see what possible harm I can be doing. I think she appeared to be very happy; she was surrounded by friends.’

‘Yes, exactly, that’s just it; I don’t quite like some of the friends.’

‘I don’t suppose I should like any of her friends. I am sure I know the face of the girl she was with: some woman’s rights orator, I think.’

‘That girl? No, that was the daughter of Mrs. Lemuel the traveller; wife of Tom Lemuel, who used to be Chief Justice at the Cape. Mrs. Lemuel is a very good woman, though she has her odd ways; her heart is in every good cause. I should be glad to see Gabrielle with such a woman’s daughter; it might keep her in serious views of a woman’s business in life. Did you see the man she was talking with?’

‘I think I saw a tall young man with dark eyes.’

‘Well, do you remember old Sir Jacob Fielding?’

‘Sir Jacob Fielding? I think I remember the name; was he something in the city? I never liked city people.’

‘Something in the city? Well, he was in a manner; but he wouldn’t have liked much to hear it put in that way, Constance. He was a member of a great banking-house—Fielding, Lane and Company—and he was one of the most earnest and public-spirited men I ever knew; he was always giving; he would take the chair at anything.’

‘This person you speak of, who was talking with her—is he anything to that Fielding?’

‘By Jove, Constance, he is his son, if I am not more mistaken than ever I was in my life. I haven’t seen him since he was a boy, or little more; but I am sure it is he; and he is very like what old Jacob Fielding himself must have been about that time of life.’

‘Is this Sir Jacob Fielding alive still?’ Mrs. Leven asked with only a languid interest.

‘No, he died four or five years ago. His eldest son, Wilberforce, succeeded to the title; old Jacob was the first baronet, you know. There were two sons; the younger fellow was called Clarkson.’

‘Clarkson?’

‘After the philanthropist—abolitionist—you know, and that was the first cause of quarrel between him and his father. When the young fellow began to grow up, he said his father oughtn’t to have called him such a name as Clarkson. Then the thing went on from bad to worse; the young fellow wouldn’t do anything to

please his father, and used to say that his father's friends were all old humbugs and I don't know what else, and he wouldn't go to church, and he wouldn't go into good society, and he took to reading Darwin, and Herbert Spencer, and at last they hit it off so badly that he went out of the country altogether. They say he was in a cavalry regiment for a while—as a common trooper, you know ; and I believe he was in India and America and all sorts of places. What he is doing here I don't know, but I am deucedly sorry to see Gabrielle in such company.'

'I dare say she will like him all the better because he did not care for the wishes of his father, but I am sorry to think that such persons should be in my Albert's house. I ought to have expected it. Perhaps she will marry him.'

'Oh, come, we must not run away with the story. Gabrielle may have only the slightest acquaintance with him ; I dare say she is sought out by lots of people ; he may have been introduced to her by some one ; she may have been asked to do something for him.'

'Is he poor ?'

'I suppose so. I know I heard that he never would touch a penny of the allowance his father was willing to continue to make him after they quarrelled. He was a wrong-headed fellow, but I fancy he was a spirited fellow.'

'He is just the man to please that mad girl,' Mrs. Leven said. 'She is sure to look on him as a hero making war against society and conventionality, and I don't know what else.'

'I'll give her a hint, anyhow,' Major Leven said.

'It will be thrown away.'

Leven shook his head.

'You are altogether wrong about that girl, Constance, and you won't allow yourself to come right. I wish you would go to her like an old friend and—and a mother, in fact ; which you very nearly are, whether you like it or no, and talk to her and advise her. She would take any advice from you.'

'Do you really want to help her, George, and to prevent her from having this person for an acquaintance ?'

'Of course I do, Constance. That is exactly what I want to do. I wish you would show me how to do it.'

'I can show you. Go to her and tell her that this young man was a model son and a pattern brother ; that he is my idea of a most desirable acquaintance and friend ; that I and all respectable friends of hers would particularly wish her to cultivate his acquaintance ; and you'll soon see an end to that whim ; he will not be very long a visitor at Albert's house.'

Major Leven did not see much use in continuing the discussion

just then. He knew that his wife's mind was still set against Gabrielle. Major Leven mentally doubted whether any man could by possibility get himself into such a perverted way of judging, independent and in defiance of all facts and evidence, as this educated, intelligent, and really generous woman had brought herself into with regard to Gabrielle. She had evidently created for herself a Gabrielle who bore not the slightest resemblance to the living Gabrielle, and who had not one quality in common with the girl she had known and loved for so many years. But in truth Gabrielle was only to Mrs. Leven what a colonial minister or a foreign minister often was to Major Leven himself. Besides, Mrs. Leven was under the necessity of justifying to herself her own anger and implacability; and how could this be done otherwise than by persistently finding sins and causes of offence in Gabrielle? Every day longer that she kept her heart closed against the girl she had been so fond of only made greater necessity for persuading herself that she was not wrong in such a course, and that her love had not turned to hate for nothing. It was not against Gabrielle alone that Mrs. Leven was fighting; it was against her own conscience and her own self-reproach.

Major Leven puzzled himself all the evening to think how he should most delicately approach Gabrielle with some warning against the acquaintance she seemed to be now making. He thought he would go and see her, and then he was afraid he might not have the courage to press his point. He thought of writing her a letter; but then, did it seem quite fair to say anything against a man of whom he personally knew so little? Then, again, if it should turn out that the man was not old Sir Jacob Fielding's son at all? But no, no; on that point he told himself there could be no doubt. He never was mistaken in a man. Why, there was the fellow he identified at Lahore whom he had only seen once a dozen years before; there was the fellow he knew at a glance when he saw him going into the ball-room at Sydney on the occasion of the Duke of Edinburgh's visit, and whom he only once got a glimpse of in the dock at the Maidstone assizes ever so long before. No, that man was old Jacob Fielding's son. Somehow or other, come what would, he must take care that Gabrielle knew at least what sort of person it was whom she was admitting to her circle of friends. Major Leven's heart was heavy within him.

It would have been heavier still had he known that on returning home that evening Gabrielle, obeying one of her sudden impulses, wrote a short note to Fielding saying that she would take it as a favour if he would call upon her next day.

(To be continued.)

Why do we Eat our Dinner?

EARLY last year a paragraph went the round of the papers, to the effect that a large female anaconda snake, in the reptile house at the Zoological Gardens, after a fast of a twelvemonth, had at length been induced to kill and swallow a duck. This very touchy and vindictive lady, it appears, had taken such grave offence at her capture in her South American home, and at her subsequent compulsory voyage to Great Britain, that she sulked persistently for a whole year, and invariably refused the keeper's most tempting offers of live rabbits or plump young pigeons. Month after month she lay passive in her cage, with her heart beating, her lungs acting, and all her vital functions proceeding with the usual slow regularity of snake life; but not a mouthful of food did she attempt to take, and not a single fresh energy did she recruit from without to keep up the working of her animal mechanism. As I read this curious case of a genuine 'fasting girl' in my 'Times' one morning, the thought struck me forcibly—Why, after all, should we expect her to feed? Why should she not go on for ever without tasting a morsel? In short, why should we eat our dinner? And I set myself to work at once to find out what was the general opinion of the unscientific public upon this important though novel question.

Singularly enough, I found that most people were content to eat their dinner in a very unreasoning and empirical way. They had always been accustomed to dine daily from their childhood upward, they felt hungry at the habitual dinner-hour, and they sat down to their five courses with an unquestioning acceptance of the necessity for feeding to prevent starvation. But when I inquired *why* people who did not eat should starve, *why* they should not imitate the thrifty anaconda, and take one meal in a twelvemonth instead of three in a day, they appeared to regard my question as rather silly, and as certainly superfluous. Yet I must confess the query seems to me both pertinent and sensible; and it may be worth while to attempt some answer here in such language as can be understood of the people, without diving into those profound mysteries of formulæ and equations with which physicists love to becloud the subjects of their investigation.

A still more startling case than that of the anaconda will help to throw a little light upon the difficult problem which we have to solve.

An Egyptian desert-snail was received at the British Museum on March 25, 1846. The animal was not known to be alive, as it had withdrawn into its shell, and the specimen was accordingly gummed, mouth downwards, on to a tablet, duly labelled and dated, and left to its fate. Instead of starving, this contented gasteropod simply went to sleep in a quiet way, and never woke up again for four years. The tablet was then placed in tepid water, and the shell loosened, when the dormant snail suddenly resuscitated himself, began walking about the basin, and finally sat for his portrait, which may be seen of life-size in Mr. Woodward's 'Manual of the Mollusca.' Now, during those four years the snail had never eaten a mouthful of any food, yet he was quite as well and flourishing at the end of the period as he had been at its beginning.

Hence we are led to the inquiry—What is the actual function which food subserves in the human body? Why is it true that we must eat or we must die, while the snake and the snail can fast for months or years together with impunity? How do we differ from these lower animals in such a remarkable degree, when all the operations of our bodies so closely resemble theirs in general principle?

Everybody has heard it said that food is to men and animals what fuel is to a steam-engine. Everybody accepts this statement in a vague sort of way, but until the last few years nobody has been able really to explain what was the common feature of the two cases. For example, most people if asked would answer that the use of food is to warm the body, but this is really quite beside the question; because, in the first place, the use of fuel is not to warm the steam-engine, but to keep up its motion; and, in the second place, many animals are scarcely perceptibly warmer than the medium in which they live. Again, most people show in every-day conversation that they consider the main object of food to be the replacement of the *materials* of the body; whereas we shall see hereafter that its real object is the replacement of the *energies* which have been dissipated in working. Indeed, there is no more reason why the materials of an animal body should waste away of themselves, apart from work done, than there is for a similar wasting away in the case of a mineral body such as a stone. When an animal does practically no work, as in the instance of our desert-snail, his body actually does not waste, but remains throughout just as big as ever. So we must look a good deal more closely into the problem if we want to understand it, and not rest content with vague generalities about food and fuel. Such half-knowledge is really worse than no knowledge at all, because it deludes us into a specious self-deception, and makes us imagine that we com-

prehend what in fact we have not taken the least trouble to examine for ourselves.

Let us begin, then, by clearly realising what is the use of fuel to the steam-engine. Obviously, you say, to set up motion. But where does the motion come from? 'From the coal,' answers the practical man, unhesitatingly. 'Well, not exactly,' says the physicist, 'but from the coal and the air together.' All energy or moving power, as we now know, is derived from the union of two bodies which have affinities or attractions for one another. Thus, if I wind up a clock, moved by a weight, I separate the mass of lead in the weight from the earth for which it has the kind of affinity or attraction known as gravitation. This attraction then draws together the weight and the earth; and in doing so, the energy I put into it is given out as motion of the clock. Similarly with coal and air: the hydrogen and carbon of the coal have affinities or attractions towards the oxygen of the air, and when I bring them together at a high temperature (of which more hereafter) they rush into one another's embrace to form carbonic acid and water, while their energy is given off as heat or motion of the surrounding bodies. We might have whole minefuls of coal at our disposal; but if we had no oxygen to unite with it, the coal would be of no more use than so much earth or stone. In ordinary life, however, the supply of oxygen is universal and abundant, while the supply of coal is limited; and so, as we have to lay in coals, while we find the oxygen laid in for us, we always quite disregard the latter factor in our fires, and speak as though the fuel were the only important element concerned. Yet one can easily imagine a state of things in which oxygen might be deficient; and in a world so constituted it would have to be regularly laid on in pipes, like gas or water, if the people wished to have any fires.

All energy, then, is derived from the separation of two or more bodies having affinities for one another. So long as the bodies remain separate, the energy is said, in the technical slang of physics, to be *potential*; as soon as the bodies unite, and the energy is manifested as motion, it is said to be *kinetic*. But these words are rather mystifying to ordinary readers, and frighten us by their bigness and their abstract sound; so I shall take the liberty of altering them for our present purpose to *dormant* and *active* respectively, which are terms quite as well adapted to express the meaning intended, and not half so likely to land us in an intellectual *cul-de-sac*, or to envelop us in a logical fog. When we take a piece of coal and a lot of free oxygen, we possess energy in the dormant state. But though the oxygen has strong attractions for the carbon and hydrogen, they cannot unite, because their atoms do not come

into close contact with one another, and because the two last named substances are bound up in the solid form of the coal. We might compare their condition to that of a weight suspended by a string, which has strong attractions towards the earth, but cannot unite with it till we cut the string. Just analogous is our action when we apply a match to the coal. The heat first disintegrates or disunites little atoms of the hydro-carbons which make it up, and sets them in a state of rapid vibration among themselves. This vibration brings them into contact with the atoms of oxygen, which at once unite with them, causing a fresh development of heat, and a liberation of all the dormant energy, which immediately assumes the active form. The carbonic acid and water (or steam) thus produced fly up the chimney, carrying with them the little bits of unburnt coal which we call smoke; and a current of fresh oxygen rushes in to unite with the fresh atoms of hydrogen and carbon which have been disengaged by the energy liberated from their fellows. So the process continues, till all the coal has been converted into carbonic acid and water—of course by the aid of a corresponding quantity of oxygen—and all the energy has been turned loose as heat upon the room in which we sit and upon the air outside.

In the case of an ordinary fire, where warmth is the single object we have in view, we only think of the heat, and disregard the other aspects of the process. But it is clear that an enormous amount of motion has also been set up by the energy of the free coal and oxygen, as exemplified by the draught up the chimney, and the numerous currents of air produced by its action within and without the room. Now, in a steam-engine we deliberately make use of this motion for our own purposes by a specially-devised mechanism. We allow the fire to heat and expand the water in the boiler, thus transferring to its molecules the separation which formerly existed between the atoms of the coal and the oxygen. Then we make the expanded water or steam push up the piston, and we connect the piston in turn with a crank which sets in motion the wheels, and so passes on the active energy to the mill, train, or ship which we desire to move, as the case may be. Thus the dormant energy of the coals and oxygen is liberated in the active state by their union, and is finally employed to effect movement in external bodies by the intermediation of the boiler. Even then, the energy does not disappear: for energy, like matter, is indestructible; but it merely passes by friction as heat to that wonderful surrounding medium which we call æther, and is dissipated into the vast void of space, no longer recoverable by us, though quite as really existent as ever.

In what way, however, has all this to do with the reason for eating our dinners? Simply this. Men and other animals may be regarded from the purely physical point of view as a kind of conscious locomotive steam-engine, with whom food stands in the place of fuel, while the possible kinds of movement are infinitely more varied and specialised. I do not mean to advance any of those 'automatic' theories which have been so current of late years. Whether they are true or false, they have nothing to do with our present subject. I only want to put in a plain light an accepted scientific truth. Men differ enormously from steam-engines in their possession of consciousness, wills, desires, pleasures, pains, and moral feelings; but they agree with them in the purely physical mechanism of their motor organs. A man, like a steam-engine, cannot move without his appropriate fuel; and if the fuel is not supplied, the fire goes out, and the man dies. The exact manner in which the materials are utilised for keeping up this vital flame is the question to which we must now address ourselves.

Food-stuffs and coal agree essentially in the chief characteristics of their chemical constitution. Both consist mainly of hydrogen and carbon, and both possess energy in virtue of the fact that their affinities for oxygen are not satisfied. Water contains hydrogen, and carbonic acid contains carbon; but we can get no motion out of these, because in them the oxygen has already united with the atoms for which it had affinity, and the separation necessary for dormant energy has ceased to exist. But in bread, meat, potatoes, or coal, the hydrogen and carbon remain in their free state, ready to unite with oxygen whenever the chance is presented to them. All alike obtained their energy in the same way. The rays of sunlight falling upon the leaves of their original trees or plants separated the oxygen from the water and carbonic acid in the air, and built up the free hydro-carbons in their tissues. The energy which they thus drank in has remained dormant within them ever since: in the case of the bread for a few short months, in that of the coal for countless millions of geological cycles. But, however long it may have rested in that latent form, whenever an opportunity occurs, the atoms will reunite with oxygen, and the energy will once more assume the active shape. There is really only one serious difference between coal and food, and that is that most foods contain another element, nitrogen, as well as carbon and hydrogen; and this nitrogen is an absolute necessity for the animal if it is to continue living. But there are good reasons for suspecting that nitrogen is not itself a fuel, being rather analogous in its nature to a match, and having for its business to set up the first beginnings of a fire, *not to keep the fire going when it has once*

been lighted. So that this apparent difference of kind is really seen to be unimportant when we get to the bottom of the question.

The various matters which an animal eats consist of pure food-stuffs and of useless concomitant bodies: just as coal consists of pure fuel and of the useless mineral matter known as ash. When an animal eats his dinner, the process of digestion and assimilation takes place, and has the ultimate result of separating the pure food-stuffs from the useless concomitants. The latter bodies are rejected at once; but the food-stuffs are taken up by his veins, incorporated with the blood (which consists of food in different degrees of combustion), and used for building up the various portions of his body. Supposing the animal were a mere growing object like a crystal, with no work to perform and no consequent waste of material, the process would stop here, and the creature would wax bigger and bigger from day to day, without any alteration in place or redistribution of assimilated matter. But the animal is essentially a locomotive machine, and the purpose for which he has taken in his food is simply that he may use it up in producing motion. For a while he stores it away in his muscles, or lays it by for future use as fat; but its ultimate destination in every instance is just as truly to be consumed for fuel as is the case with the coal in the steam-engine.

The food, however, only gives us one half of the necessary materials for the liberation of dormant energy. Oxygen is needed to give us the other half. This oxygen we take in whenever we breathe. Animals like fishes or sea-snails obtain the necessary supply from the water by means of gills; for large quantities of oxygen are held in solution by water, and the needs of such comparatively sluggish creatures are not very great. With them, a little energy goes a long way. Air-breathing animals like ourselves, on the other hand, need relatively large quantities of the energy-yielding gas in order to keep up the constant movements and high temperature of their bodies. Such creatures accordingly take in the oxygen by great inhalations, and absorb it in their lungs, where it passes through the thin membrane of the capillaries, or very tiny blood-vessels, and so mixes freely with the blood itself. Thus we have food, supplied to the blood by the stomach, the exact analogue of the coal in the engine; and oxygen, supplied to the blood by the lungs, the exact analogue of the draught in the engine. Whenever these two substances—the hydro-carbonaceous foods and the free oxygen—reunite, they will necessarily give out heat and set up active movements.

The exact place and mode of their recombination we cannot

yet be said to fully understand. But even if we did, the details would be sufficiently dry and uninteresting to general readers; and we know quite enough to put the subject in a simple and comprehensible form before those who are willing to accept the broad facts without small criticism.

We may say, then, that the energies of the body are used up in two principal ways—automatically and voluntarily. The automatic activities are produced by the steady and constant oxidation of some portion of the food-stuffs in the blood and tissues. As this oxidation takes place, it sets up certain regular movements, which compose what is (very incorrectly) known as the vegetative life in animals. There are an immense number of these movements always going on within our bodies, quite apart from our knowledge or will. Such are the beating of the heart, with the consequent propulsions of blood through the system; the expirations and inspirations of the lungs, which supply us with the oxygen for carrying on these processes; the act of digestion and assimilation; and many other minor functions of like sort. But just as in the case of the steam-engine, so in the human or animal body, the union of the oxygen with the hydro-carbons, besides producing motion, liberates heat. This heat keeps the bodies of birds, quadrupeds, and human beings, which are all very active in their automatic movements, at a much higher temperature than the surrounding medium; while reptiles, fishes, and other ‘cold-blooded’ creatures, having much less energetic motions of the heart and lungs—which of course betokens much less oxidation of food-stuffs—have bodies comparatively little different in warmth from the air or water about them. We thus see in part why it was that the anaconda and the desert-snail could go so long without food; though we cannot quite understand that question till we have examined the voluntary movements as well. It should be added that, though the latter class of actions also produce heat—as we all know when we walk about on a cold day to warm ourselves—yet the temperature induced by the automatic activities of the body alone is generally sufficient under normal circumstances to keep us comfortably warm. Thus, while we are asleep, only the actions of breathing and the beating of the heart continue; but the union of oxygen with the food-stuffs to produce these movements suffices as a rule to make bed quite hot enough for all healthy persons; and if we ever wake up cold after a good night’s rest, we may be sure that our automatic activities are not what they ought to be.

The voluntary activities of the body are brought about in a slightly different manner. Directly or indirectly, they depend

upon the union of oxygen and food-stuffs within the tissues of our locomotive muscles, the energy so liberated being made use of to bend or extend our bones or limbs in the particular way we desire. The muscles always contain (in a healthy and well-fed person) large quantities of such stored-up food-stuffs; and the blood supplies them from moment to moment with oxygen which may unite with the food-stuffs whenever occasion demands. But the union does not here take place regularly and constantly, as in the case of the automatic organs: it requires to be set up by an impetus specially communicated from the brain. That seat of the will is connected with the various voluntary muscles by the living telegraphic wires which we call nerves; and when the will determines that a certain muscle shall be moved, the nerves communicate the disturbance to the proper quarter, the necessary oxidation takes place, and the muscle contracts as desired. We do not quite know how the nerves and muscles perform these functions; but it is pretty certain that the nitrogen of our foods plays an active part in the process, and that, as I have already hinted, it acts in a manner somewhat analogous to that of a match. We may suppose, to put the matter in a familiar form, that the will sends down a sort of electric spark¹ to the muscle; and that this spark, lighting up the explosive nitrogen, causes an immediate union of the oxygen with the constituents of muscle, and so produces the visible movement.

Of course, voluntary actions, like automatic ones, liberate heat; but this heat is generally somewhat in excess of what is required for comfort, especially in hot weather. Lower animals, however, which have no fires and no artificial clothing, require it more than we do to keep us warm; and even we ourselves in wintry weather always feel chilly in the morning until we have had a good brisk walk to set up oxidation, and consequently liberate enough heat to make us comfortable. .

Thus all motion, in the animal as in the steam-engine, depends upon the union of oxygen with food or body-fuel. It is true that in the animal body oxygen can unite directly with carbon and hydrogen without the necessity of a high temperature, which we saw was indispensable in the case of the coal, in order to bring the two sets of atoms within the sphere of their mutual attractions. But the difference is probably due to the different condition of the hydro-carbonaceous substances within the animal body; or else, as others conjecture, to the assumption by the oxygen of that peculiar state in which it is known as ozone. At any rate, the two processes do not disagree in any essential particular, being both cases

¹ I am speaking quite metaphorically and popularly, and do not mean to imply adhesion to the electrical rather than to the isomeric theory of nervous conduction.

in which free substances, possessing dormant energy by virtue of their separation and their affinity for one another, unite together, and in so doing liberate their energy as heat and visible motion.

There is, however, one important distinction of detail between the mechanism of a steam-engine and the mechanism of an animal body, which gives rise to many of the mistaken notions as to the use of food which we noticed above. In the engine, we put all the coal into the furnace, and burn it there at once; while the piston, cylinder, cranks, and wheels are not composed of combustible material, but of solid iron. In the animal body, on the other hand, every muscle is at once furnace, boiler, and piston; it consists of combustible materials, which unite with oxygen in the tissues themselves, and set up motion within the muscle of which they form a portion. The case is just the same as though the joints of an engine, instead of being quite rigid, were composed of hollow india-rubber and whalebone, with iron attachments; were then filled with coal, oxygen, and water, and possessed the power of burning up these materials internally and setting up motions in the india-rubber tubings. Hence the materials in the muscles are always undergoing change. The carbon and hydrogen which have united with the oxygen are perpetually forming carbonic acid and water;¹ and, as these have lost or given up all their energy, they are naturally of no more use to the body than the similar carbonic acid and steam which fly up the draught are of use to the engine. Accordingly, they are taken up by the stream of blood as it passes, separated from the useful components of that compound liquid by an appropriate organ, and rejected from the body as of no further service.

But their place in the muscle must once more be supplied by fresh energetic materials; and these materials are brought to it by the self-same blood which removes the de-energised waste products. And now we begin to see why we must eat our dinners or starve. Every time our heart beats, every time our lungs draw in a breath, a certain amount of matter in the tissues of the muscles which produced those motions undergoes oxidation, and is carried off in the oxidised form to be cast out of the body as waste. Every new pulsation or breath requires a certain new quantity of energetic material, both as food-stuffs and as oxygen; and hence we must supply the one from the stomach and the other from the lungs if we wish to keep the mechanism going. The store of hydro-carbonaceous matters laid by in the body is generally con-

¹ I purposely simplify and omit details, so as to give the reader a graphic and comprehensible picture of the central facts. So long as essentials are not distorted, a good diagram is far better for educational purposes than an accurate facsimile.

siderable in well-fed persons; for, besides the contents of the muscles themselves, we have usually a large reserve fund in the shape of fat, ready to be utilised when occasion arises. Hence, we can get along for a very short time, if necessary, without food; because we can fall back, first upon the fat-reserve, and then upon the muscles and tissues, for energetic materials. But after a time the ceaseless beating of the heart and movement of the lungs will use up all the available matters, and the blood will cast off the oxidised product and excrete it from the body; till at last no more materials are forthcoming, the whole contents of the tissues have been oxidised and got rid of, and the heart and lungs must perforce cease to act, in which case the unhappy victim is said to have died of starvation. As regards the supply of oxygen, on the other hand, we are very much more restricted in our power of endurance; for we have no large store of this necessary for combustion laid by in our bodies, and if the supply be cut off for a single moment (as by compressing the throat or suffocating with carbonic acid) the heart and lungs must cease at once to act, and death takes place immediately. For of course death, viewed on its purely physical side, means the cessation of that set of activities which results from the union of oxygen with the food-stuffs in the body.

By this time I hope the reader can see quite clearly what is the necessity for eating his dinner. If we are to live, we must keep up the cycle of our bodily activities, and especially those two fundamental ones, the breathing of the lungs and the beating of the heart. In order to do this, we must supply the muscles employed with the two energy-yielding substances, oxygen and hydro-carbons. The supply of oxygen must be continuous; in other words, we must never for a moment leave off breathing: but the supply of hydro-carbons may be intermittent, though it must be sufficient on the whole to balance waste. We must not regard the object of food, however, as being merely to build up the matter of the body; we must rather consider it as intended to recruit the energies of the body. The more active any creature is, both in its automatic and its voluntary movements, the greater will be the amount of hydro-carbons consumed or used up in its muscles, and the greater, consequently, the amount of food and oxygen which it will require to make up the loss. The tiny humming-bird will need far more food in a year than the great anaconda with which we began our discourse: because the humming-bird has a rapidly-moving heart and lungs, while the cold-blooded snake respire and circulates slowly; and the humming-bird darts about perpetually at lightning speed from flower to flower, while the snake lies

coiled up motionless in its blanket from year's end to year's end, or only comes out sleepily now and then to swallow the food which will keep up its vital actions through another long and lazy fast.

The desert-snail, however, can endure much longer without food than even the anaconda, because, like so many other mollusca, it can *hybernate*. This process of hibernation consists in the inducement of a state during which the heart ceases to beat, respiration is suspended, and the animal can hardly be said to live at all. But when warmth and moisture are once more applied, the heart recommences its action, the lungs or gills quicken their movements, voluntary locomotion ensues, and the creature sets out again on the quest for food. Something analogous occurs in the case of the bear, the dormouse, and other hibernating quadrupeds; but in these instances the vital functions continue much more in their ordinary state, and are kept up by the supply of fat which is dissolved by the blood, and consumed in effecting the necessary automatic actions. The bear, which goes to sleep in the autumn as sleek and plump as a prize pig, wakes up in the spring a poor lean wretch, with only just flesh enough to cover his bones, and carry him off in search of fresh food. The much more complicated mechanism of the higher animals requires to be kept always in action; it cannot cease almost entirely, like that of the snail, and then revive again when circumstances become more favourable. Hence hibernating mammals must lay by fat during the summer to keep their principal organs at work during the long winter fast. Yet, even among human beings, cases of 'trance' or 'suspended animation' occasionally occur, during which the cycle of vital actions almost entirely ceases to all appearance for a considerable time, and then begins again on the application of some external or internal stimulus—which latter may be not unaptly compared to the slight shaking which we sometimes give a watch or clock to set it going when stopped by a momentary impediment. Persons recovered from drowning, in whom the cessation of action has been quite sudden and has not affected the structure of their organs, are often thus restored by the judicious use of rubbing and alcohol.

The camel presents a more interesting phenomenon in his well-known humps. These protuberances consist really of reserve-stores of fat, which the camel uses, not only for keeping up the action of his heart and lungs, but also for producing locomotion in his frequent enforced fasts amongst the deserts of Arabia or India. The humps dwindle away as he marches, in a manner exactly similar to that of the bear's fat during his hibernation, only of

course much more rapidly, as they have so much more work to perform.

Finally, it may appear strange that the small amount of food we eat should suffice to carry our large and bulky bodies through all the varied movements of the day. But this difficulty disappears at once when we recollect how large an amount of energy can be laid by dormant in a very small piece of matter. A lump of coal no bigger than one's fist, if judiciously employed, will suffice to keep a small toy-engine at work for a considerable time. Now, our food is matter containing large amounts of dormant energy, and our bodies are engines constructed so as to utilise all the energy to the best advantage. A single gramme of beef-fat, if completely burned (that is, if every atom unites with oxygen), is capable of developing more than 9,000 heat-units; and each such heat-unit, if employed to perform mechanical work, is capable of lifting a weight of one gramme to a height of 424 metres; or, what comes to the same thing, 424 grammes to a height of one metre. Accordingly, the energy contained in one gramme of beef-fat (and the oxygen with which it unites) would be sufficient to raise the little bit of fat itself to a height of 3,816 kilometres, or about as high as from London to New York. Again, it may seem curious that the food eaten by the anaconda in South America, and stored up in its tissues, should suffice to keep up the action of its heart and lungs for so many months. But then we must remember that it performed very few other movements, most probably, during all that time; and if we think how small an amount of energy we expend in winding up an eight-day clock, and how infinitesimal a part of our dinner must have been used up in imparting to it the motion which will keep it swinging and ticking for one hundred and ninety-two hours, we can easily understand how the large amount of stored-up energy in the snake's muscles might very well serve to keep up its automatic actions for so long a time.

There are five hundred other little points which this mode of regarding our bodies at once clears up. It shows us why we are warmer after eating a meal, why cold is harder to endure when we are hungry, why we need so little food when we are lying in bed inactive, and so much when we are taking a walking-tour or training for a boat-race, why cold-blooded animals eat so rarely and warm-blooded creatures so often, why we get thin when we take too little food, and why we lay on fat when we take too little exercise. But these and many other questions must be passed over in silence, or left to the reader's discrimination, lest I should make this paper tediously long. It must suffice for the present if

I have given any of my readers a more rational reason in future for eating their dinners. To be sure, Nature herself has admirably provided that even the most unscientific person should find sufficient internal conviction as to the desirability of dining without the aid of extraneous exhortation; but it is at least some comfort to know that so universal and so unreasoning a practice is not altogether an unreasonable one as well.

GRANT ALLEN.

Cruel Fate.

Ah me, why was I born
A girl and not a boy?
I could so well have worn
The larger grief and joy.
My lovers all-forlorn,
My poodle quaintly shorn,
My sweets and sonnets, cloy.
I'm tired of being coy—
Ah me, why was I born
A girl and not a boy?

I should have wound a horn
In Paladins' employ,
Or waited night and morn
Before the walls of Troy.
But mine's a lot to scorn,
Not even Muse or Norn,
A trivial modern toy,
A freak of Fate's annoy;
Ah me, why was I born
A girl and not a boy?

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

A Legend of Cologne.

BY BRET HARTE.

ABOVE the bones
 St. Ursula owns,
 And those of the virgins she *chaperones* ;
 Above the boats,
 And the bridge that floats,
 And the Rhine and the steamer's smoky throats ;
 Above the chimneys and quaint tiled roofs,
 Above the clatter of wheels and hoofs ;
 Above Newmarket's open space,
 Above that consecrated place
 Where the genuine bones of the Magi seen are,
 And the dozen shops of the real Farina.
 Higher than even old *Hohestrasse*,
 Whose houses threaten the timid passer ;
 Above them all,
 Through scaffolds tall
 And spires like delicate limbs in splinters,
 The great Cologne's
 Cathedral stones
 Climb through the storms of eight hundred winters.

Unfinished there,
 In high mid air
 The towers halt like a broken prayer ;
 Through years belated,
 Unconsummated,
 The hope of its architect quite frustrated.
 Its very youth
 They say, forsooth,
 With a quite improper purpose mated ;
 And every stone
 With a curse of its own

Instead of that sermon Shakespeare stated,
 Since the day its choir,
 Which all admire,
By Cologne's Archbishop was consecrated.

 Ah! *that* was a day,
 One well might say,
To be marked with the largest, whitest stone
To be found in the towers of all Cologne!
 Along the Rhine,
 From old Rheinstein,
The people flowed like their own good wine.
 From Rudesheim,
 And Geisenheim,
And every spot that is known to rhyme;
From the famed Cat's Castle of St. Goarshausen,
To the pictured roofs of Assmannshausen;
 And down the track,
 From quaint Schwalbach
To the clustering tiles of Bacharach;
 From Bingen, hence
 To old Coblentz:
From every castellated crag,
Where the robber chieftains kept their 'swag,'
The folk flowed in, and Ober-cassel
Shone with the pomp of knight and vassal;
And pouring in from near and far,
As the Rhine to its bosom draws the Ahr,
Or takes the arm of the sober Mosel,
So in Cologne, knight, squire, and losel,
Choked up the city's gates with men
From old St. Stephen to *Zint Märjen*.

What had they come to see? Ah me!
I fear no glitter of pageantry,
 Nor sacred zeal
 For Church's weal,

Nor faith in the virgins' bones to heal ;
 Nor childlike trust in frank confession
 Drew these, who, dyed in deep transgression,
 Still in each nest
 On every crest
 Kept stolen goods in their possession ;
 But only their *goût*
 For something new,
 More rare than the ' roast ' of a wandering Jew ;
 Or—to be exact,
 To see—in fact—
 A Christian soul, in the very act
 Of being damned, *secundum artem*,
 By the devil before a soul could part 'em.

For a rumour had flown
 Throughout Cologne,
 That the Church, in fact, was the devil's own ;
 That its architect,
 (Being long ' suspect, ')
 Had confessed to the bishop that he had wreckt
 Not only his *own* soul, but had lost
 The *very first Christian soul* that crossed
 The sacred threshold ; and all, in fine,
 For that very beautiful design
 Of the wonderful choir
 They were pleased to admire.
 And really, he must be allowed to say—
 To speak in a purely business way—
 That, taking the ruling market prices
 Of souls and churches, in such a crisis
 It would be shown—
 And his Grace must own—
 It was really a *bargain* for Cologne !

Such was the tale
 That turned cheeks pale
 With the thought that the enemy might prevail,

And the church doors snap
With a thunder-clap
On a Christian soul in that devil's trap.
But a wiser few,
Who thought that they knew
Cologne's Archbishop, replied, 'Pooh, pooh!
Just watch him and wait,
And as sure as fate
You'll find that the Bishop will give "checkmate." '

One here might note
How the popular vote,
As shown in all legends and anecdote,
Declares that a breach
Of trust to o'erreach
The devil is something quite proper for each ;
And really, if you
Give the devil his due,
In spite of the proverb—it's something you'll rue.
But to lie and deceive him,
To use and to leave him,
From Job up to Faust is the way to receive him,
Though no one has heard
It ever averred
That the 'Father of Lies' ever yet broke *his* word,
But has left this position,
In every tradition,
To be taken alone by the 'truth-loving' Christian!

Born! from the tower!
It is the hour!
The host pours in its pomp and power
Of banners and pyx,
And high crucifix,
And crosiers and other processional sticks,
And no end of Marys
In quaint reliquaries,

To gladden the souls of all true antiquaries ;
 And an *Osculum Pacis*—
 (A myth to the masses
 Who trusted their bones more to mail and cuirasses),
 All borne by the throng
 Who are marching along
 To the square of the Dom with processional song,
 With the flaring of dips,
 And bending of hips,
 And the chanting of hundred perfunctory lips ;
 And some good little boys
 Who had come up from Neuss
 And the *Quirinuskirche* to show off their voice ;
 All march to the square
 Of the great Dom, and there
 File right and left, leaving alone and quite bare
 A covered sedan,
 Containing—so ran
 The rumour—the victim to take off the ban.

 They have left it alone,
 They have sprinkled each stone
 Of the porch with a sanctified *Eau de Cologne*,
 Guaranteed in this case
 To disguise every trace
 Of a sulphurous presence in that sacred place.
 Two Carmelites stand
 On the right and left hand
 Of the covered sedan chair, to wait the command
 Of the prelate to throw
 Up the cover and show
 The form of the victim in terror below.
 There's a pause and a prayer,
 Then the signal, and there—
 Is a *woman*!—by all that is good and is fair !

 A woman ! and known
 To them all. One must own

Too well known to the many, to-day to be shown
As a martyr, or e'en
As a Christian! A queen
Of pleasaunce and revel, of glitter and sheen.
So bad that the worst
Of Cologne spake up first,
And declared 'twas an outrage to suffer one curst,
And already a fief
Of the Satanic chief,
To martyr herself for the Church's relief.
But in vain fell their sneer
On the mob, who I fear
On the whole felt a strong disposition to cheer.

A woman! and there
She stands in the glare
Of the pitiless sun and their pitying stare.
A woman still young,
With garments that clung
To a figure though wasted with passion, and wrung
With remorse and despair,
Yet still passing fair,
With jewels and gold in her dark shining hair,
And cheeks that are faint
'Neath her dyes and her paint—
A woman most surely—but hardly a saint!

She moves. She has gone
From their pity and scorn;
She has mounted alone
The first step of stone,
And the high swinging doors she wide open has thrown,
Then pauses and turns
As the altar blaze burns
On her cheeks, and with one sudden gesture she spurns
Archbishop and Prior,
Knight, ladye, and friar,
And her voice rings out high from the vault of the choir.

A LEGEND OF COLOGNE.

'Oh, men of Cologne!
 What I *was* ye have known,
 What I *am*, as I stand here, One knoweth alone.
 If it be but His will
 I shall pass from Him still
 Lost, curst, and degraded, I reckon no ill
 If still by that sign
 Of His anger divine
 One soul shall be saved He hath blessed more than mine!
 Oh, men of Cologne!
 Stand forth if ye own
 A faith like to this, or more fit to atone,
 And take ye my place,
 And God give you grace
 To stand and confront Him, like me, face to face!'

She paused. Yet aloof
 They all stand. No reproof
 Breaks the silence that fills the celestial roof.
 One instant—no more—
 She halts at the door,
 Then enters! . . . A flood from the roof to the floor
 Fills the church rosy red.
 She is gone!

But instead,
 Who is this leaning forward with glorified head
 And hands stretched to save?
 Sure, this is no slave
 Of the Powers of Darkness, with aspect so brave!

They press to the door,
 But too late! All is o'er;
 Nought remains but a woman's form prone on the floor.
 But they still see a trace
 Of that glow in her face,
 That they saw in the light of the altar's high blaze,
 On the image that stands
 With the Babe in its hands,
 Enshrined in the churches of all Christian lands.

A *Te Deum* sung,
A censer high swung,
With praise, benediction, and incense wide-flung,
Proclaim that the *curse*
Is removed—and no worse
Is the Dom for the trial—in fact, the *reverse*.
For instead of their losing
A soul in abusing
The Evil One's faith, they gained one of his choosing.

Thus the legend is told,
You will find in the old
Vaulted aisles of the Dom—stiff in marble or cold
In iron and brass,
In gown and cuirass,
The knights, priests, and bishops who came to that Mass.
And high o'er the rest,
With her Babe at her breast,
The image of Mary Madonna—the blest.
But you look round in vain,
On each high pictured pane,
For the woman most worthy to walk in her train.

Yet, standing to-day
O'er the dust and the clay,
Midst the ghosts of a life that has long passed away,
With the slow-sinking sun
Looking softly upon
That stained-glass procession, I scarce miss the one
That it does not reveal,
For I know and I feel
That these are but shadows—the woman was real!

Artificial Somnambulism.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

RATHER MORE than a quarter of a century ago two Americans visited London, who called themselves Professors of Electro-Biology, and claimed the power of 'subjugating the most determined wills, paralysing the strongest muscles, preventing the evidence of the senses, destroying the memory of the most familiar events or of the most recent occurrences, inducing obedience to any command, and making an individual believe himself transformed into any one else.' All this and more was to be effected, they said, by the action of a small disc of zinc and copper held in the hand of the 'subject,' and steadily gazed at by him, 'so as to concentrate the electro-magnetic action.' The pretensions of these professors received before long a shock as decisive as that which overthrew the credit of the professors of animal magnetism when Haygarth and Falconer successfully substituted wooden tractors for the metallic tractors which had been supposed to convey the magnetic fluid. In 1851, Mr. Braid, a Scotch surgeon, who had witnessed some of the exhibitions of the electro-biologists, conceived the idea that the phenomena were not due to any special qualities possessed by the discs of zinc and copper, but simply to the fixed look of the 'subject' and the entire abstraction of his attention. The same explanation applied to the so-called 'magnetic passes' of the mesmerists. The monotonous manipulation of the operator produced the same effect as the fixed stare of the 'subject.' He showed by his experiments that no magnetiser, with his imaginary secret agents or fluids, is in the least wanted; but that the subjects can place themselves in the same condition as the supposed subjects of electro-biological influences by simply gazing fixedly at some object for a long time with fixed attention.

The condition thus superinduced is not hypnotism, or artificial somnambulism, properly so called. The 'electro-biological' condition may be regarded as simply a kind of reverie or abstraction artificially produced. But Braid discovered that a more perfect control might be obtained over 'subjects,' and a condition resembling that of the sleep-walker artificially induced, by modifying the method of fixing the attention. Instead of directing the subject's gaze upon a bright object placed at a considerable distance from the eyes, so that no effect was required to

concentrate vision upon it, he placed a bright object somewhat above and in front of the eyes at so short a distance that the convergence of their axes upon it was accompanied with sufficient effect to produce even a slight amount of pain. The condition to which the 'subjects' of this new method were reduced was markedly different from the ordinary 'electro-biological' state. Thus on one occasion, in the presence of 800 persons, fourteen men were experimented upon. 'All began the experiment at the same time; the former with their eyes fixed upon a projecting cork, placed securely on their foreheads; the others at their own will gazed steadily at certain points in the direction of the audience. In the course of ten minutes the eyelids of these ten persons had involuntarily closed. With some consciousness remained; others were in catalepsy, and entirely insensible to being stuck with needles; and others on awakening knew absolutely nothing of what had taken place during their sleep.' The other four simply passed into the ordinary condition of electro-biologised 'subjects,' retaining the recollection of all that happened to them while in the state of artificial abstraction or reverie.

Dr. Carpenter, in that most interesting work of his, 'Mental Physiology,' thus describes the state of hypnotism:—'The process is of the same kind as that employed for the induction of the "biological" state; the only difference lying in the *greater intensity* of the gaze, and in the more complete concentration of will upon the direction of the eyes, which the nearer approximation of the object requires for the maintenance of the convergence. In hypnotism, as in ordinary somnambulism, no remembrance whatever is preserved in the waking state of anything that may have occurred during its continuance; although the previous train of thought may be taken up and continued uninterruptedly on the next occasion that the hypnotism is induced. And when the mind is not excited to activity by the stimulus of external impressions, the hypnotised subject appears to be profoundly asleep; a state of complete torpor, in fact, being usually the first result of the process, and any subsequent manifestation of activity being procurable only by the prompting of the operator. The hypnotised subject, too, rarely opens his eyes; his bodily movements are usually slow; his mental operations require a considerable time in their performance; and there is altogether an appearance of heaviness about him, which contrasts strongly with the comparatively wide-awake air of him who has not passed beyond the ordinary "biological" state.'

We must note, however, in passing, that the condition of complete hypnotism had been obtained in several instances by some

of the earlier experimenters in animal magnetism. One remarkable instance was communicated to the surgical section of the French Academy on April 16, 1829, by Jules Cloquet. Two meetings were entirely devoted to its investigation. The following account presents all the chief points of the case, surgical details being entirely omitted, however, as not necessary for our present purpose :—A lady, aged sixty-four, consulted M. Cloquet on April 8, 1829, on account of an ulcerated cancer of the right breast which had continued, gradually growing worse, during several years. M. Chapelain, the physician attending the lady, had ‘magnetised’ her for some months, producing no remedial effects, but only a very profound sleep or torpor, during which all sensibility seemed to be annihilated, while the ideas retained all their clearness. He proposed to M. Cloquet to operate upon her while she was in this state of torpor, and the latter, considering the operation the only means of saving her life, consented. The two doctors do not appear to have been troubled by any scruples as to their right thus to conduct an operation to which, when in her normal condition, their patient most strenuously objected. It sufficed for them that, when they had put her to sleep artificially, she could be persuaded to submit to it. On the appointed day, M. Cloquet found the patient ready ‘dressed and seated in an elbow-chair, in the attitude of a person enjoying a quiet natural sleep.’ In reality, however, she was in the somnambulistic state, and talked calmly of the operation. During the whole time that the operation lasted—from ten to twelve minutes—she continued to converse quietly with M. Cloquet, ‘and did not exhibit the slightest sign of sensibility. There was no motion of the limbs or of the features, no change in the respiration nor in the voice ; no emotions even in the pulse. The patient continued in the same state of automatic indifference and impassibility in which she had been some minutes before the operation.’ For forty-eight hours after this the patient remained in the somnambulistic state, showing no sign of pain during the subsequent dressing of the wound. When awakened from this prolonged sleep she had no recollection of what had passed in the interval ; ‘but on being informed of the operation, and seeing her children around her, she experienced a very lively emotion, which the “magnetiser” checked by immediately setting her asleep.’ Certainly none of the hypnotised ‘subjects’ of Mr. Braid’s experiments showed more complete abstraction from their normal condition than this lady ; and other cases cited in Bertrand’s work, ‘*Le Magnétisme Animal en France*’ (1826), are almost equally remarkable. As it does not appear that in any of these cases Braid’s method of producing

hypnotism by causing the eyes, or rather their optical axes, to be converged upon a point was adopted, we must conclude that this part of the method is not absolutely essential to success. Indeed, the circumstance that in some of Braid's public experiments numbers of the audience became hypnotised without his knowledge, shows that the more susceptible 'subjects' do not require to contemplate a point near and slightly above the eyes, but may be put into the true hypnotic state by methods which, with the less susceptible, produce only the electro-biological condition.

It will be well, however, to inquire somewhat carefully into this point. My present object, I would note, is not merely to indicate the remarkable nature of the phenomena of hypnotism, but to consider these phenomena with direct reference to their probable cause. It may not be possible to obtain a satisfactory explanation of them. But it is better to view them as phenomena, to be accounted for than merely as surprising but utterly inexplicable circumstances.

Now, we have fortunately the means of determining the effect of the physical relations involved in these experiments, apart from those which are chiefly due to imagination. For animals can be hypnotised, and the conditions necessary for this effect to be fully produced have been ascertained.

The most familiar experiment of this sort is sometimes known as Kircher's. Let the feet of a hen be tied together (though this is not necessary in all cases), and the hen placed on a level surface. Then if the body of the hen is gently pressed down, the head extended with the beak pointing downwards, touching the surface on which the hen stands, and a chalk mark is drawn slowly along the surface, from the tip of the beak in a line extending directly from the bird's eye, it is found that the hen will remain for a considerable time perfectly still, though left quite free to move. She is, in fact, hypnotised.

We have now to inquire what parts of the process just described are effective in producing the hypnotic condition, or whether all are essential to success in the experiment.

In the first place, the fastening of the feet may be dispensed with. But it has its influence, and makes the experiment easier. An explanation, or rather an illustration, of its effect is afforded by a singular and interesting experiment devised by Lewissohn of Berlin:—If a frog is placed on its back, it immediately, when the hand which had held it is removed, turns over and escapes. But if the two fore-legs are tied with a string, the frog, when placed on its back, breathes heavily but is otherwise quite motionless, and does not make the least attempt to escape, even when the experi-

menter tries to move it. 'It is as though,' says Czermak, describing the experiment as performed by himself, 'its small amount of reasoning power had been charmed away, or else that it slept with open eyes. Now I press upon the cutaneous nerves of the frog, while I loosen and remove the threads on the fore-legs. Still the animal remains motionless upon its back, in consequence of some remaining after-effect: at last, however, it returns to itself, turns over, and quickly escapes.'

Thus far the idea suggested is that the animal is so affected by the cutaneous pressure as to suppose itself tied and therefore unable to move. In other words, this experiment suggests that imagination acts on animals as on men, only in a different degree. I may cite here a curious case which I once noticed and have never been able to understand, though it seems to suggest the influence of imagination on an animal one would hardly suspect of being at all under the influence of any but purely physical influences. Hearing a noise as of a cat leaping down from a pantry window which looked out on an enclosed yard, I went directly into the yard, and there saw a strange cat running off with a fish she had stolen. She was at the moment leaping on to a bin, from the top of which, by another very easy leap, she could get on to the wall enclosing the yard, and so escape. With the idea rather of frightening her than of hurting her (does one missile out of a hundred flung at cats ever hit them?) I threw at the thief a small piece of wood which I had in my hand at the moment. It struck the wall above her just as she was going to leap to the top of the wall, and it fell, without touching her, between her and the wall. To my surprise, she stood perfectly still, looking at the piece of wood; her mouth, from which the fish had fallen, remaining open, and her whole attitude expressing stupid wonder. I make no doubt I could have taken her prisoner, or struck her heavily, if I had wished, for she made no effort to escape, until, with a parlour broom which stood by, I pushed her along the top of the bin towards the wall, on which she seemed suddenly to arouse herself, and leaping to the top of the wall she made off. My wife witnessed the last scene of this curious little comedy. In fact, it was chiefly, perhaps, because she pleaded for mercy on 'the poor thing' that the soft end of the broom alone came into operation; for, though not altogether agreeing with the Count of Rousillon that anything can be endured before a cat, I did not at the moment regard that particular cat with special favour.

The extension of the neck and depression of the head, in the experiment with the hen, have no special significance, for Czermak has been able to produce the same phenomena of hypnotism with-

out them, and has failed to produce the hypnotic effect on pigeons when attending to this point, and in other respects proceeding as nearly as possible in the same way as with hens. 'With the hens,' he says, 'I often hung a piece of twine, or a small piece of wood, directly over their crests, so that the end fell before their eyes. The hens not only remained perfectly motionless, but closed their eyes, and slept with their heads sinking until they came in contact with the table. Before falling asleep, the hens' heads can be either pressed down or raised up, and they will remain in this position as if they were pieces of wax. That is, however, a symptom of a cataleptic condition, such as is seen in human beings, under certain pathological conditions of the nervous system.'

On the other hand, repeated experiments convinced Czermak that the pressure on the animal as it is held is of primary importance. It is frequently the case, he says, that a hen, which for a minute has been in a motionless state, caused by simply extending the neck and depressing the head, awakes and flies away, but on being caught again immediately, she can be placed once more in the condition of lethargy, if we place the animal in a squatting position, and overcome with gentle force the resistance of the muscles, by firmly placing the hand upon its back. During the slow and measured suppression, one often perceives an extremely remarkable position of the head and neck, which are left entirely free. The head remains as if held by an invisible hand in its proper place, the neck being stretched out of proportion, while the body by degrees is pushed downwards. If the animal is thus left entirely free, it remains for a minute or so in this peculiar condition with wide-open staring eyes. 'Here,' as Czermak remarks, 'the actual circumstances are only the effect of the emotion which the nerves of the skin excite, and the gentle force which overcomes the animal's resistance. Certainly the creature a short time before had been in a condition of immobility, and might have retained some special inclination to fall back into the same, although the awakening, flight, and recapture, together with the refreshment given to the nervous system, are intermediate circumstances.' Similar experiments are best made upon small birds. Now, it is well known to bird-fanciers that goldfinches, canary-birds, &c. can be made to remain motionless for some time by simply holding them firmly for a moment and then letting them go. 'Here, in my hand,' said Czermak, in his lecture, 'is a timid bird, just brought from market. If I place it on its back, and hold its head with my left hand, keeping it still for a few seconds, it will lie perfectly motionless after I have removed my hands, as if charmed, breathing heavily, and without making any attempt to change its position or

to fly away.' ('Two of the birds,' says the report, 'were treated in this manner without effect; but the third, a siskin, fell into a sleeping condition, and remained completely immovable on its back, until pushed with a glass tube, when it awoke and flew actively around the room.')

Also when a bird is in a sitting position, and the head is pressed slightly back, the bird falls into a sleeping condition, even though the eyes had been open. 'I have often noticed,' says Czermak, 'that the [birds under these circumstances close their eyes for a few minutes or even a quarter of an hour, and are more or less fast asleep.'

Lastly, as to the chalk-line in Kircher's experiment. Czermak found, as already said, that pigeons do not become motionless, as happens to hens, if merely held firmly in the hand, and their heads and necks pressed gently on the table. Nor can they be hypnotised like small birds in the experiment last mentioned. 'That is,' he says, 'I held them with a thumb placed on each side of the head, which I bent over a little, while the other hand held the body gently pressed down upon the table; but even this treatment, which has such an effect on little birds, did not seem to succeed at first with the pigeons: almost always they flew away as soon as I liberated them and entirely removed my hands.' But he presently noticed that the short time during which the pigeons remained quiet lengthened considerably when the finger only of the hand which held the head was removed. Removing the hand holding the body made no difference, but retaining the other hand near the bird's head, the hand made all the difference in the world. Pursuing the line of research thus indicated, Czermak found to his astonishment that the fixing of the pigeon's look on the finger placed before its eyes was the secret of the matter. In order to determine the question still more clearly, he tried the experiment on a pigeon which he had clasped firmly by the body in his left hand, but whose neck and head were perfectly free. 'I held one finger of my right hand steadily before the top of its beak,—and what did I see? The first pigeon with which I made this attempt remained rigid and motionless, as if bound, for several minutes, before the outstretched forefinger of my right hand! Yes, I could take my left hand, with which I had held the bird, and again touch the pigeon without waking it up; the animal remained in the same position while I held my outstretched finger still pointing toward the beak.' 'The lecturer,' says the report, 'demonstrated this experiment in the most successful manner with a pigeon which was brought to him.'

Yet it is to be noticed that among animals, as among men,

different degrees of subjectivity exist. 'Individual inward relations,' says Czermak, 'as well as outward conditions, must necessarily exercise some disturbing influence, whether the animal will give itself up to the requisite exertions of certain parts of its brain with more or less inclination or otherwise. We often see, for example, that a pigeon endeavours to escape from confinement by a quick turning of its head from side to side. In following these singular and characteristic movements of the head and neck, with the finger held before the bird, one either gains his point, or else makes the pigeon so perplexed and excited that it at last becomes quiet, so that, if it is held firmly by the body and head, it can be forced gently down upon the table. As Schopenhauer says of sleeping, "The brain must bite." I will also mention here, by the way, that a tame parrot, which I have in my house, can be placed in this sleepy condition by simply holding the finger steadily before the top of its beak.'

I may cite here a singular illustration of the effect of perplexity in the case of a creature in all other respects much more naturally circumstanced than the hens, pigeons, and small birds of Czermak's experiments. In the spring of 1859, when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, I and a friend of mine were in canoes on the part of the Cam which flows through the College grounds. Here there are many ducks and a few swans. It occurred to us, not, I fear, from any special scientific spirit, but as a matter of curiosity, to inquire whether it was possible to pass over a duck in a canoe. Of course on the approach of either canoe a duck would try to get out of the way on one side or the other; but on the course of the canoe being rapidly changed, the duck would have to change his course. Then the canoe's course would again be changed, so as to impel the duck to try the other side. The canoe drawing all the time nearer, and her changes of course being made very lightly and in quicker and quicker alternation as she approached, the duck would generally get bewildered, and finally would allow the canoe to pass over him, gently pressing him under water in its course. The process, in fact, was a sort of exceedingly mild keel-hauling. The absolute rigidity of body and the dull stupid stare with which some of the ducks met their fate seems to me (*now*: I was not in 1859 familiar with the phenomena of hypnotism) to suggest that the effect was to be explained as Czermak explains the hypnotism of the pigeons on which he experimented.

We shall be better able now to understand the phenomena of artificial somnambulism in the case of human beings. If the circumstances observed by Kircher, Czermak, Lewissohn, and others, suggest, as I think they do, that animal hypnotism is a form of

the phenomenon sometimes called fascination, we may be led to regard the possibility of artificial somnambulism in men as a survival of a property playing in all probability an important and valuable part in the economy of animal life. It is in this direction, at present, that the evidence seems to tend.

The most remarkable circumstance about the completely hypnotised subject is the seemingly complete control of the will of the 'subject' and even of his opinions. Even the mere suggestions of the operator, not expressed verbally or by signs, but by movements imparted to the body of the subject, are at once responded to, as though, to use Dr. Garth Wilkinson's expression, the *whole man* were given to each perception. Thus, 'if the hand be placed,' says Dr. Carpenter, 'upon the top of the head, the somnambulist will frequently, of his own accord, draw up his body to its fullest height, and throw his head slightly back; his countenance then assumes an expression of the most lofty pride, and his whole mind is obviously possessed by that feeling. When the first action does not of itself call forth the rest, it is sufficient for the operator to straighten the legs and spine, and to throw the head somewhat back, to arouse that feeling and the corresponding expression to its fullest intensity. During the most complete domination of this emotion, let the head be bent forward, and the body and limbs gently flexed; and the most profound humility then instantaneously takes its place.' Of course in some cases we may well believe that the expressions thus described by Dr. Carpenter have been simulated by the subject. But there can be no reason to doubt the reality of the operator's control in many cases. Dr. Carpenter says that he has not only been an eye-witness of them on various occasions, but that he places full reliance on the testimony of an intelligent friend, who submitted himself to Mr. Braid's manipulations, but retained sufficient self-consciousness and voluntary power to endeavour to exercise some resistance to their influence at the time, and subsequently to retrace his course of thought and feeling. 'This gentleman declares,' says Dr. Carpenter, 'that, although accustomed to the study of character and to self-observation, he could not have conceived that the whole mental state should have undergone so instantaneous and complete a metamorphosis, as he remembers it to have done, when his head and body were bent forward in the attitude of humility, after having been drawn to their full height in that of self-esteem.'

A most graphic description of the phenomena of hypnotism is given by Dr. Garth Wilkinson:—'The preliminary state is that of abstraction, produced by fixed gaze upon some unexciting and empty thing (for poverty of object engenders abstraction),

and this abstraction is the logical premiss of what follows. Abstraction tends to become more and more abstract, narrower and narrower; it tends to unity and afterwards to nullity. There, then, the patient is, at the summit of attention, with no object left, a mere statue of attention, a listening, expectant life; a perfectly undistracted faculty, dreaming of a lessening and lessening mathematical point: the end of his mind sharpened away to nothing. What happens? Any sensation that appeals is met by this brilliant attention, and receives its diamond glare; being perceived with a force of leisure of which our distracted life affords only the rudiments. External influences are sensated, sympathised with, to an extraordinary degree; harmonious music sways the body into graces the most affecting; discords jar it, as though they would tear it limb from limb. Cold and heat are perceived with similar exaltation; so also smells and touches. In short, *the whole man appears to be given to each perception.* The body trembles like down with the wafts of the atmosphere; the world plays upon it as upon a spiritual instrument finely attuned.'

This state, which may be called the natural hypnotic state, may be artificially modified. 'The power of suggestion over the patient,' says Dr. Garth Wilkinson, 'is excessive. If you say, "What animal is it?" the patient will tell you it is a lamb, or a rabbit, or any other. "Does he see it?" "Yes." "What animal is it *now*?" putting depth and gloom into the tone of *now*, and thereby suggesting a difference. "Oh!" with a shudder, "it is a wolf!" "What colour is it?" still glooming the phrase. "Black." "What colour is it *now*?" giving the *now* a cheerful air. "Oh! a beautiful blue!" (rather an unusual colour for a wolf, I would suggest), spoken with the utmost delight (and no wonder! especially if the hypnotic subject were a naturalist). And so you lead the subject through any dreams you please, by variations of questions and of inflections of the voice; and *he sees and feels all as real.*'

We have seen how the patient's mind can be influenced by changing the posture of his body. Dr. Wilkinson gives very remarkable evidence on this point. 'Double his fist and pull up his arm, if you dare,' he says, of the subject, 'for you will have the strength of your ribs rudely tested. Put him on his knees and clasp his hands, and the saints and devotees of the artists will pale before the trueness of his devout actings. Raise his head while in prayer, and his lips pour forth exulting glorifications, as he sees heaven opened, and the majesty of God raising him to his place; then in a moment depress the head, and he is in dust and ashes, an unworthy sinner, with the pit of hell yawning at his feet. Or compress the forehead, so as to wrinkle it vertically, and thorny-

toothed clouds contract in from the very horizon' (in the subject's imagination, it will be understood); 'and what is remarkable, the smallest pinch and wrinkle, such as will lie between your nipping nails, is sufficient nucleus to crystallise the man into that shape, and to make him all foreboding, as, again, the smallest expansion in a moment brings the opposite state, with a full breathing of delight.'

Some will perhaps think the next instance the most remarkable of all, perfectly natural though one half of the performance may have been. The subject being a young lady, the operator asks whether she or another is the prettier, raising her head as he puts the question. 'Observe,' says Dr. Wilkinson, 'the inexpressible hauteur, and the puff sneers let off from the lips' (see Darwin's treatise on the 'Expression of the Emotions,' plate IV. 1, and plate V. 1) 'which indicate a conclusion too certain to need utterance. Depress the head, and repeat the question, and mark the self-abasement with which she now says '*She is,*' as hardly worthy to make the comparison.'

In this state, in fact, 'whatever posture of any passion is induced, the passion comes into it at once, and dramatises the body accordingly.'

It might seem that there must of necessity be some degree of exaggeration in this description, simply because the power of adequately expressing any given emotion is not possessed by all. Some can in a moment bring any expression into the face, or even simulate at once the expression and the aspect of another person, while many persons, probably most, possess scarcely any power of the sort, and fail ridiculously even in attempting to reproduce the expressions corresponding to the commonest emotions. But it is abundantly clear that the hypnotised subject possesses for the time being abnormal powers. No doubt this is due to the circumstance that for the time being 'the whole man is given to each perception.' The stories illustrative of this peculiarity of the hypnotised state are so remarkable that they have been rejected as utterly incredible by many who are not acquainted with the amount of evidence we have upon this point.

The instances above cited by Dr. Garth Wilkinson, remarkable though they may be, are surpassed altogether in interest by a case which Dr. Carpenter mentions,—of a factory girl, whose musical powers had received little cultivation, and who could scarcely speak her own language correctly, who nevertheless exactly imitated both the words and the music of vocal performances by Jenny Lind. Dr. Carpenter was assured by witnesses in whom he could place implicit reliance, that this girl, in the hypnotised state, followed

the Swedish nightingale's songs in different languages 'so instantaneously and correctly, as to both words and music, that it was difficult to distinguish the two voices. In order to test the powers of the somnambulist to the utmost, Mademoiselle Lind extemporised a long and elaborate chromatic exercise, which the girl imitated with no less precision, though in her waking state she durst not even attempt anything of the sort.'

The exaltation of the senses of hypnotised subjects is an equally wonderful phenomenon. Dr. Carpenter relates many very remarkable instances as occurring within his own experience. He has 'known a youth, in the hypnotised state,' he says, 'to find out, by the sense of smell, the owner of a glove which was placed in his hand, from amongst a party of more than sixty persons, scenting at each of them one after the other, until he came to the right individual. In another case, the owner of a ring was unhesitatingly found out from amongst a company of twelve, the ring having been withdrawn from the finger before the somnambule was introduced.' The sense of touch has, in other cases, been singularly intensified, insomuch that slight differences of heat, which to ordinary feeling were quite inappreciable, would be at once detected, while such differences as can be but just perceived in the ordinary state would produce intense distress.

In some respects, the increase of muscular power, or rather of the power of special muscles, is even more striking, because it is commonly supposed by most persons that the muscular power depends entirely on the size and quality of the muscles, the state of health, and like conditions, not on the imagination. Of course every one knows that the muscles are capable of greater efforts when the mind is much excited by fear and other emotions. But the general idea is, I think, that whatever the body is capable of doing under circumstances of great excitement, it is in reality capable of doing at all times if only a resolute effort is made. Nor is it commonly supposed that a very wide difference exists between the greatest efforts of the body under excitement and those of which it is ordinarily capable. Now, the condition of the hypnotised subject is certainly not one of excitement. The attempts which he is directed to make are influenced only by the idea that he *can* do what he is told, not that he *must* do so. When a man pursued by a bull leaps over a wall which under ordinary conditions he would not even think of climbing, we can understand that he only does, because he must, what, if he liked, he could do at any time. But if a man, who had been making his best efforts in jumping, cleared only a height of four feet, and presently, being told to jump over an eight-foot wall, cleared that height with apparent ease,

we should be disposed to regard the feat as savouring of the miraculous.

Now, Dr. Carpenter saw one of Mr. Braid's hypnotised subjects—a man so remarkable for the poverty of his physical development that he had not for many years ventured to lift up a weight of twenty pounds in his ordinary state—take up a quarter of a hundredweight upon his little finger, and swing it round his head with the utmost apparent ease, on being told that it was as light as a feather. 'On another occasion he lifted a half-hundredweight on the last joint of his fore-finger, as high as his knee.' The personal character of the man placed him above all suspicion of deceit, in the opinion of those who best knew him; and, as Dr. Carpenter acutely remarks, 'the impossibility of any trickery in such a case would be evident to the educated eye, since, if he had practised such feats (which very few, even of the strongest men, could accomplish without practice), the effect would have made itself visible in his muscular development.' 'Consequently,' he adds, 'when the same individual afterwards declared himself unable, with the greatest effort, to lift a handkerchief from the table, after having been assured that he could not possibly move it, there was no reason for questioning the truth of his conviction, based as this was upon the same kind of suggestion as that by which he had been just before prompted to what seemed an otherwise impossible action.'

The explanation of this and the preceding cases cannot be mistaken by physiologists, and is very important in its bearing on the phenomena of hypnotism generally, at once involving an interpretation of the whole series of phenomena, and suggesting other relations not as yet illustrated experimentally. It is well known that in our ordinary use of any muscles we employ but a small part of the muscle at any given moment. What the muscle is actually capable of is shown in convulsive contractions, in which far more force is put forth than the strongest effort of the will could call into play. We explain, then, the seeming increase of strength in any set of muscles during the hypnotic state as due to the concentration of the subject's will in an abnormal manner, or to an abnormal degree, on that set of muscles. In a similar way, the great increase of certain powers of perception may be explained as due to the concentration of the will upon the corresponding parts of the nervous system.

In like manner, the will may be directed so entirely to the operations necessary for the performance of difficult feats, that the hypnotised or somnambulistic subject may be able to accomplish what in his ordinary condition would be impossible or even utterly

appalling to him. Thus sleep-walkers (whose condition precisely resembles that of the artificially hypnotised, except that the suggestions they experience come from contact with inanimate objects, instead of being aroused by the actions of another person) 'can clamber walls and roofs, traverse narrow planks, step firmly along high parapets, and perform other feats which they would shrink from attempting in their waking state.' This is simply, as Dr. Carpenter points out, because they are *not distracted* by the sense of danger which their vision would call up, from concentrating their exclusive attention on the guidance afforded by their muscular sense.'

But the most remarkable and suggestive of all the facts known respecting hypnotism is the influence which can by its means be brought to bear upon special parts or functions of the body. We know that imagination will hasten or retard certain processes commonly regarded as involuntary (indeed, the influence of imagination is itself in great degree involuntary). We know further that in some cases imagination will do much more than this, as in the familiar cases of the disappearance of warts under the supposed influence of charms, the cure of scrofula at a touch, and hundreds of well-attested cases of so-called miraculous cures. But although the actual cases of the curative influence obtained over hypnotised patients may not be in reality more striking than some of these, yet they are more suggestive at any rate to ordinary minds, because they are known not to be the result of any charm or miraculous interference, but to be due to simply natural processes initiated by natural though unfamiliar means.

Take, for instance, such a case as the following, related by Dr. Carpenter (who has himself witnessed many remarkable cases of hypnotic cure):—'A female relative of Mr. Braid's was the subject of a severe rheumatic fever, during the course of which the left eye became seriously implicated, so that after the inflammatory action had passed away, there was an opacity over more than one half of the cornea, which not only prevented distinct vision, but occasioned an annoying disfigurement. Having placed herself under Mr. Braid's hypnotic treatment for the relief of violent pain in her arm and shoulder, she found, to the surprise alike of herself and Mr. Braid, that her sight began to improve very perceptibly. The operation was therefore continued daily; and in a very short time the cornea became so transparent that close inspection was required to discover any remains of the opacity.' On this, Carpenter remarks that he has known other cases in which secretions that had been morbidly suspended, have been reinduced by this process; and is satisfied that, if applied

with skill and discrimination, it would take rank as one of the most potent methods of treatment which the physician has at his command. He adds that 'the channel of influence is obviously the system of nerves which regulates the secretions—nerves which, though not under direct subjection to the will, are peculiarly affected by emotional states.'

I may remark, in passing, that nerves which are not ordinarily under the influence of the will, but whose office would be to direct muscular movements if only the will could influence them, may by persistent attention become obedient to the will. When I was last in New York, I met a gentleman who gave me a long and most interesting account of certain experiments which he had made on himself. The account was not forced on me, the reader must understand, but was elicited by questions suggested by one or two remarkable facts which he had casually mentioned as falling within his experience. I had only his own word for much that he told me, and some may perhaps consider that there was very little truth in the narrative. I may pause here to make some remarks by the way, on the traits of truthful and untruthful persons. I believe very slight powers of observation are necessary to detect want of veracity in any man, though absence of veracity in any particular story may not be easily detected or established. I am not one who believe every story I hear, or trust in every one I meet. But I have noticed one or two features by which the habitual teller of untruths may be detected very readily, as may also one who, without telling actual falsehoods, tries to heighten the effect of any story he may have to tell, by strengthening all the particulars. My experience in this respect is unlike Dickens's, who believed, and indeed found, that a man whom on first seeing he distrusted, and justly, could explain away the unfavourable impression. 'My first impression,' he says, 'about such people, founded on face and manner alone, was invariably true; my mistake was in suffering them to come nearer to me and explain themselves away.' I have found it otherwise; though of course Dickens was right about his own experience: the matter depends entirely on the idiosyncrasies of the observer. I have often been deceived by face and expression: never, to the best of my belief (and belief in this case is not mere opinion, but is based on results), by manner of speaking. One peculiarity I have never found wanting in habitually mendacious persons—a certain intonation which I cannot describe, but recognise in a moment, suggestive of the weighing of each sentence as it is being uttered, as though to consider how it would tell. Another, is a peculiarity of manner, but it only shows itself during speech; it is a sort of watchfulness often disguised

under a careless tone, but perfectly recognisable however disguised. Now, the gentleman who gave me the experience I am about to relate, conveyed to my mind, by every intonation of his voice and every peculiarity and change of manner, the idea of truthfulness. I cannot convey to others the impression thus conveyed to myself: nor do I expect that others will share my own confidence: I simply state the case as I know it, and as far as I know it. It will, however, be seen that a part of the evidence was confirmed on the spot.

The conversation turned on the curability of consumption. My informant, whom I will henceforth call A., said that, though he could not assert from experience that consumption was curable, he believed that in many cases where the tendency to consumption is inherited and the consumptive constitution indicated so manifestly that under ordinary conditions the person would before long be hopelessly consumptive, an entire change may be made in the condition of the body, and the person become strong and healthy. He said: 'I belong myself to a family many of whose members have died of consumption. My father and mother both died of it, and all my brothers and sisters save one brother; yet I do not look consumptive, do I?' and certainly he did not. A. then took from a pocket-book a portrait of his brother, showing a young man manifestly in very bad health, looking worn, weary, and emaciated. From the same pocket-book A. then took another portrait, asking if I recognised it. I saw here again a worn and emaciated face and figure. The picture was utterly unlike the hearty well-built man before me, yet it manifestly represented no other. If I had been at all doubtful, my doubts would have been removed by certain peculiarities to which A. called my attention. I asked how the change in his health had been brought about. He told me a very remarkable story of his treatment of himself, part of which I omit because I am satisfied he was certainly mistaken in attributing to that portion of his self-treatment any part of the good result which he had obtained, and that if many consumptive patients adopted the remedy, a large proportion, if not all, would inevitably succumb very quickly. The other portion of his account is all that concerns us here, being all that illustrates our present subject. He said: 'I determined to exercise every muscle of my body; I set myself in front of a mirror and concentrated my attention and all the power of my will on the muscle or set of muscles I proposed to bring into action. Then I exercised those muscles in every way I could think of, continuing the process till I had used in succession every muscle over which the will has control. While carrying out this system, I noticed that gradually the will acquired power over

muscles which before I had been quite unable to move. I may say, indeed, that every set of muscles recognised by anatomists, except those belonging to internal organs, gradually came under the control of my will.' Here I interrupted, asking (not by any means as doubting his veracity, for I did not): 'Can you do what Dundreary said he thought some fellow might be able to do? can you waggle your left ear.' 'Why, certainly,' he replied; and, turning the left side of his head towards me, he moved his left ear about; not, it is true, wagging it, but drawing it up and down in a singular way, which was, he said, the only exercise he ever gave it. He said, on this, that there are many other muscles over which the will has ordinarily no control, but may be made to obtain control; and forthwith, drawing the cloth of his trousers rather tight round the right thigh (so that the movement he was about to show might be discernible) he made in succession the three muscles of the front and inner side of the thigh rise about half an inch along some nine or ten inches of their length. Now, though these muscles are among those which are governed by the will, for they are used in a variety of movements, yet not one in ten thousand, perhaps in a million, can move them in the way described.

How far A.'s system of exciting the muscles individually as well as in groups may have operated in improving his health, as he supposed, I am not now inquiring. What I wish specially to notice is the influence which the will may be made to obtain over muscles ordinarily beyond its control. It may be that under the exceptional influence of the imagination, in the hypnotic condition, the will obtains a similar control for a while over even those parts of the nervous system which appertain to the so-called involuntary processes. In other words, the case I have cited may be regarded as occupying a sort of middle position between ordinary cases of muscular action and those perplexing cases in which the hypnotic subject seems able to influence pulsation, circulation, and processes of secretion in the various parts or organs of his body.

It must be noted, however, that the phenomena of hypnotism are due solely to the influence of the imagination. The quasi-scientific explanations which attributed them to magnetism, electricity, some subtle animal fluid, some occult force, and so forth, have been as completely negatived as the supernatural explanation. We have seen that painted wooden tractors were as effectual as the metal tractors of the earlier mesmerists; a small disc of card or wood is as effective as the disc of zinc and copper used by the electro-biologists; and now it appears that the

mystical influence, or what was thought such, of the operation is no more essential to success than magnetic or electric apparatus.

Dr. Noble, of Manchester, made several experiments to determine this point. Some among them seem absolutely decisive.

Thus, a friend of Dr. Noble's had a female servant whom he had frequently thrown into the hypnotic state, trying a variety of experiments, many of which Dr. Noble had witnessed. Dr. Noble was at length told that his friend had succeeded in magnetising her from another room and without her knowledge, with some other stories even more marvellous, circumstantially related by eye-witnesses, 'amongst others by the medical attendant of the family, a most respectable and intelligent friend' of Dr. Noble's own. As he remained unsatisfied, Dr. Noble was invited to come and judge for himself, proposing whatever test he pleased. 'Now, had we visited the house,' he says, 'we should have felt dissatisfied with any result,' knowing 'that the presence of a visitor or the occurrence of anything unusual was sure to excite expectation of some mesmeric process.' 'We therefore proposed,' he proceeds, 'that the experiment should be carried on at our own residence; and it was made under the following circumstances:—The gentleman early one evening wrote a note, as if on business, directing it to ourselves. He thereupon summoned the female servant (the mesmeric subject), requesting her to convey the note to its destination, and to wait for an answer. The gentleman himself, in her hearing, ordered a cab, stating that if any one called he was going to a place named, but was expected to return by a certain hour. Whilst the female servant was dressing for her errand, the master placed himself in the vehicle, and rapidly arrived at our dwelling. In about ten minutes after, the note arrived, the gentleman in the mean time being secreted in an adjoining apartment, we requested the young woman, who had been shown into our study, to take a seat whilst we wrote the answer; at the same time placing the chair with its back to the door leading into the next room, which was left ajar. It had been agreed that after the admission of the girl into the place where we were, the magnetiser, approaching the door in silence on the other side, should commence operations. There, then, was the patient or "subject," placed within two feet of her magnetiser—a door only intervening, and that but partially closed—but she, all the while, perfectly free from all idea of what was going on. We were careful to avoid any unnecessary conversation with the girl, or even to look towards her, lest we should raise some suspicion in her own mind. We wrote our letter (as if in answer) for nearly a quarter of an hour, once or twice only making an indifferent remark; and on leaving the room for

a light to seal the supposed letter, we beckoned the operator away. No effect whatever had been produced, although we had been told that two or three minutes were sufficient, even when mesmerising from the drawing-room, through walls and apartments into the kitchen. In our own experiment the intervening distance had been very much less, and only one solid substance intervened and that not completely; but here we suspect was the difference - *the "subject" was unconscious of the magnetism, and expected nothing.*

In another case Dr. Noble tried the converse experiment, with equally convincing results. Being in company one evening with a young lady said to be of high mesmeric susceptibility, he requested and received permission to test this quality in her. In one of the usual ways, he 'magnetised' her, and having so far satisfied himself, he 'demagnetised' her. He next proceeded to 'hypnotise' her, adopting Mr. Braid's method of directing the stare at a fixed point. 'The result varied in no respect from that which had taken place in the foregoing experiment; the duration of the process was the same, and its intensity of effect neither greater nor less.' 'De-hypnotisation' again restored the young lady to herself. 'And now,' says Dr. Noble, 'we requested our patient to rest quietly at the fire-place, to think of just what she liked, and to look where she pleased, excepting at ourselves, who retreated behind her chair, saying that a new mode was about to be tried, and that her turning round would disturb the process. We very composedly took up a volume which lay upon a table, and amused ourselves with it for about five minutes; when, on raising our eyes, we could see, by the excited features of other members of the party, that the young lady was once more *magnetised*. We were informed by those who had attentively watched her during the progress of our little experiment, that all had been in every respect just as before. The lady herself, before she was undeceived, expressed a distinct consciousness of having *felt our unseen passes streaming down the neck.*'

In a similar way, Mr. Bertrand, who was the first (Dr. Carpenter tells us) to undertake a really scientific investigation of the phenomena of mesmerism, proved that the supposed effect of a magnetised letter from him to a female somnambule was entirely the work of her own lively imagination. He magnetised a letter first, which on receipt was placed at his suggestion upon the epigastrium of the patient, who was thrown into the magnetic sleep with all the customary phenomena. He then wrote another letter, which he did not magnetise, and again the same effect was produced. *Lastly, he set about an experiment which should determine*

the real state of the case. 'I asked one of my friends,' he says, 'to write a few lines in my place, and to strive to imitate my writing, so that those who should read the letter should mistake it for mine (I knew he could do so). He did this; our stratagem succeeded; and the sleep was produced just as it would have been by one of my own letters.'

It is hardly necessary to say, perhaps, that none of the phenomena of hypnotism require, as indeed none of them, rightly understood, suggest, the action of any such occult forces as spiritualists believe in. On the other hand, I believe that many of the phenomena recorded by spiritualists as having occurred under their actual observation are very readily to be explained as phenomena of hypnotism. Of course I would not for a moment deny that in the great majority of cases much grosser forms of deception are employed. But in others, and especially in those where the concentration of the attention for some time is a necessary preliminary to the exhibition of the phenomena (which suitable 'subjects' only are privileged to see), I regard the resulting self-deception as hypnotic.

We may regard the phenomena of hypnotism in two aspects—first and chiefly as illustrating the influence of imagination on the functions of the body; secondly as showing under what conditions the imagination may be most readily brought to bear in producing such influence. These phenomena deserve far closer and at the same time far wider attention than they have yet received. Doubt has been thrown upon them because they have been associated with false theories, and in many cases with fraud and delusion. But, rightly viewed, they are at once instructive and valuable. On the one hand they throw light on some of the most interesting problems of mental physiology; on the other they promise to afford valuable means of curing certain ailments, and of influencing in useful ways certain powers and functions of the body. All that is necessary, it should seem, to give hypnotic researches their full value, is that all association of these purely mental phenomena with charlatanry and fraud should be abruptly and definitely broken off. Those who make practical application of the phenomena of hypnotism should not only divest their own minds of all idea that some occult and as it were extra-natural force is at work, but should encourage no belief in such force in those on whom the hypnotic method is employed. Their influence on the patient will not be lessened, I believe, by the fullest knowledge on the patient's part that all which is to happen to him is purely natural—that, in fact, advantage is simply to be taken of an observed property of the imagination to obtain an influence *not otherwise attainable* over the body as a

whole (as when the so-called magnetic sleep is to be produced), or over special parts of the body. Whether advantage might not be taken of other than the curative influences of hypnotism is a question which will probably have occurred to some who may have followed the curious accounts given in the preceding pages. If special powers may be obtained, even for a short time, by the hypnotised subject, these powers might be systematically used for other purposes than mere experiment. If, again, the repetition of hypnotic curative processes eventually leads to a complete and lasting change in the condition of certain parts or organs of the body, the repetition of the exercise of special powers during the hypnotic state may after a while lead to the definite acquisition of such powers. As it now appears that the hypnotic control may be obtained without any effort on the part of the operator, the effort formerly supposed to be required being purely imaginary, and the hypnotic state being in fact readily attainable without any operation whatever, we seem to recognise possibilities which, duly developed, might be found of extreme value to the human race. In fine, it would seem that man possesses a power which has hitherto lain almost entirely dormant, by which, under the influence of properly-guided imaginations, the will can be so concentrated on special actions that feats of strength, dexterity, artistic (and even perhaps scientific) skill may be accomplished by persons who, in the ordinary state, are quite incapable of such achievements.

A Literary Fable.

WHEN those who wield the rod forget,
 'Tis truly—*Quis custodiet?*
 —A certain Bard (as bards will do)
 Dressed up his poems for review.
 His type was clear, his title plain;
 His frontispiece by WALTER CRANE.
 Moreover, he had on the back
 A sort of high-art Zodiac;—
 A mask, a harp, an owl,—in fine,
 A neat and 'classical' design.
 But the *in-side*?—Well, good or bad,
 The inside was the best he had:
 Much memory,—more imitation;—
 Some accidents of inspiration;—
 Some essays in that finer fashion
 Where Fancy takes the place of Passion;—
 And some (of course) more roughly wrought
 To catch the advocates of Thought.
 —In the less-crowded age of ANNE,
 Our Bard had been a favoured man;
 Fortune, more chary with the sickle,
 Had ranked him next to GARTH or TICKELL;—
 He might have even dared to hope
 A line's malignity from POPE!
 But now, when folks are hard to please,
 And poets are as thick as—peas,
 The Fates are not so prone to flatter,
 Unless, indeed, a Friend . . . No matter.
 —The Book, then, had a minor credit:
 The Critics took, and doubtless read it.
 Said A.—*These little songs display
 No lyric gift; but still a ray,—
 A promise. They will do no harm.*
 'Twas kindly, if not *very* warm.
 Said B.—*The author may, in time,
 Acquire the rudiments of rhyme:
 His efforts now are scarcely verse.*
 This, certainly, could not be worse.

Sorely discomfited, our Bard
Worked for another ten years—hard.
Meanwhile the World, unmoved, went on ;
New stars shot up, shone out, were gone ;
Before his second volume came
His critics had forgot his name :—
And who, forsooth, is bound to know
Each Laureate *in embryo* !
They tried and tested him, no less,—
The pure assayers of the Press.
Said A.—*The author may, in time . . .*
Or much what B. had said of rhyme.
Then B.—*These little songs display . . .*
And so forth, in the sense of A.
Over the Bard I throw a veil.

There is no MORAL to this tale.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

The Great Revolution in Pitcairn.

BY MARK TWAIN.

LET me refresh the reader's memory a little. Nearly a hundred years ago, the crew of the British ship 'Bounty' mutinied, set the captain and his officers adrift upon the open sea, took possession of the vessel, and sailed southward. They procured wives for themselves among the natives of Tahiti, then proceeded to a lonely little rock in mid-Pacific, called Pitcairn's Island, wrecked the ship, stripped her of everything that might be useful to a new colony, and established themselves on shore.

Pitcairn's is so far removed from the track of commerce that it was many years before another vessel touched there. It had always been considered an uninhabited island; so when a ship did at last drop its anchor there, in 1808, the captain was greatly surprised to find the place peopled. Although the mutineers had fought among themselves, and gradually killed each other off until only two or three of the original stock remained, these tragedies had not occurred until after a number of children had been born; so in 1808 the island had a population of twenty-seven persons. John Adams, the chief mutineer, still survived, and was to live many years yet, as governor and patriarch of the flock. From being mutineer and homicide, he had turned Christian and teacher, and his nation of twenty-seven persons was now the purest and devoutest in Christendom. Adams had long ago hoisted the British flag and constituted his island an appanage of the British crown.

To-day the population numbers ninety persons—sixteen men, nineteen women, twenty-five boys, and thirty girls—all descendants of the mutineers, all bearing the family names of those mutineers, and all speaking English, and English only. The island stands high up out of the sea, and has precipitous walls. It is about three-quarters of a mile long, and in places is as much as half a mile wide. Such arable land as it affords is held by the several families, according to a division made many years ago. There is some live stock—goats, pigs, chickens, and cats—but no dogs, and no large animals. There is one church building; this is used also as a capitol, a school-house, and a public library. The title of the governor has been, for a generation or two, 'Magistrate and Chief Ruler, in subordination to her Majesty the Queen of

Great Britain.' It was his province to *make* the laws, as well as execute them. His office was elective; everybody over seventeen years old had a vote, no matter about the sex. The sole occupations of the people were farming and fishing; their sole recreation religious services. There has never been a shop in the island, nor any money. The habits and dress of the people have always been primitive and simple; their laws simple to puerility. They have lived in a deep Sabbath tranquillity, far from the world and its ambitions and vexations, and neither knowing nor caring what was going on in the mighty empires that lie beyond their limitless ocean solitudes. Once in three or four years a ship touched there, moved them with aged news of bloody battles, devastating epidemics, fallen thrones, and ruined dynasties, then traded them some soap and flannel for some yams and bread-fruit, and sailed away, leaving them to retire into their peaceful dreams and pious dissipations once more.

On September 8 last, Admiral de Horsey, commander-in-chief of the British fleet in the Pacific, visited Pitcairn's Island, and speaks as follows in his official report to the Admiralty:—

'They have beans, carrots, turnips, cabbages, and a little maize; pineapples, fig-trees, custard apples, and oranges; lemons and cocoa-nuts. Clothing is obtained alone from passing ships, in barter for refreshments. There are no springs on the island; but as it rains generally once a month they have plenty of water, although at times, in former years, they have suffered from drought. No alcoholic liquors, except for medicinal purposes, are used, and a drunkard is unknown. . . .

'The necessary articles required by the islanders are best shown by those we furnished in barter for refreshments—namely, flannel, serge, drill, half-boots, combs, tobacco, and soap. They also stand much in need of maps and slates for their school; and tools of any kind are most acceptable. I caused them to be supplied from the public stores with a union-jack for display on the arrival of ships, and a pit saw, of which they were greatly in need. This, I trust, will meet the approval of their lordships. If the munificent people of England were only aware of the wants of this most deserving little colony, they would not long go unsupplied. . . .

'Divine service is held every Sunday at 10.30 A.M. and at 3 P.M., in the house built and used by John Adams for that purpose, until he died in 1829. It is conducted strictly in accordance with the liturgy of the Church of England, by Mr. Simon Young, their selected pastor, who is much respected. A Bible class is held every Wednesday, when all who conveniently can, attend. There

is also a general meeting for prayer on the first Friday in every month. Family prayers are said in every house the first thing in the morning and the last thing in the evening, and no food is partaken of without asking God's blessing before and afterwards. Of these islanders' religious attributes no one can speak without deep respect. A people whose greatest pleasure and privilege is to commune in prayer with their God, and to join in hymns of praise, and who are, moreover, cheerful, diligent, and probably freer from vice than any other community, need no priest among them.'

Now I come to a sentence in the admiral's report which he dropped carelessly from his pen, no doubt, and never gave the matter a second thought. He little imagined what a freight of tragic prophecy it bore! This is the sentence:—

'One stranger, an American, has settled on the island—a *doubtful acquisition.*'

A doubtful acquisition indeed. Captain Ormsby, in the American ship *Hornet*, touched at Pitcairn's nearly four months after the admiral's visit, and from the facts which he gathered there we now know all about that American. Let us put these facts together, in historical form. The American's name was Butterworth Stavely. As soon as he had become well acquainted with all the people—and this took but a few days, of course—he began to ingratiate himself with them by all the arts he could command. He became exceedingly popular, and much looked up to; for one of the first things he did was to forsake his worldly way of life, and throw all his energies into religion. He was always reading his Bible, or praying, or singing hymns, or asking blessings. In prayer, no one had such 'liberty' as he, no one could pray so long or so well.

At last, when he considered the time to be ripe, he began secretly to sow the seeds of discontent among the people. It was his deliberate purpose, from the beginning, to subvert the government, but of course he kept that to himself for a time. He used different arts with different individuals. He awakened dissatisfaction in one quarter by calling attention to the shortness of the Sunday services; he argued that there should be three three-hour services on Sunday instead of only two. Many had secretly held this opinion before; they now privately banded themselves into a party to work for it. He showed certain of the women that they were not allowed sufficient voice in the prayer-meetings; thus another party was formed. No weapon was beneath his notice; he even descended to the children, and awoke discontent in their breasts because—as *he* discovered for them—they had not enough Sunday-school. This created a third party.

Now, as chief of these parties, he found himself the strongest power in the community. So he proceeded to his next move—a no less important one than the impeachment of the chief magistrate, James Russell Nickoy, a man of character and ability, and possessed of great wealth, he being the owner of a house with a parlour to it, three acres and a half of yam land, and the only boat in Pitcairn's—a whale-boat. Most unfortunately, a pretext for this impeachment offered itself at just the right time. One of the earliest and most precious laws of the island was the law against trespass. It was held in great reverence, and regarded as the palladium of the people's liberties. About thirty years ago an important case came before the courts under this law, in this wise:—A chicken belonging to Elizabeth Young (aged, at that time, fifty-eight, a daughter of John Mills, one of the mutineers of the *Bounty*) trespassed upon the grounds of Thursday October Christian (aged twenty-nine, a grandson of Fletcher Christian, one of the mutineers). Christian killed the chicken. According to the law, Christian could keep the chicken; or, if he preferred, he could restore its remains to the owner, and receive damages in 'produce' to an amount equivalent to the waste and injury wrought by the trespasser. The court records set forth that 'the said Christian aforesaid did deliver the aforesaid remains to the said Elizabeth Young, and did demand one bushel of yams in satisfaction of the damage done.' But Elizabeth Young considered the demand exorbitant; the parties could not agree; therefore Christian brought suit in the courts. He lost his case in the Justices' Court; at least, he was awarded only a half peck of yams, which he considered insufficient, and in the nature of a defeat. He appealed. The case lingered several years in an ascending grade of courts, always resulting in decrees sustaining the original verdict; and finally the thing got into the Supreme Court, and there it stuck for twenty years. But last summer, even the Supreme Court managed to arrive at a decision at last. Once more the original verdict was sustained. Christian then said he was satisfied; but Staveland was present, and whispered to him and to his lawyer, suggesting, 'as a mere form,' that the original law be exhibited, in order to make sure that it still existed. It seemed an odd idea, but an ingenious one; so the demand was made. A messenger was sent to the magistrate's house, and presently returned with the tidings that it had disappeared from among the State archives.

The court now pronounced its late decision void, since it had been made under a law which had no actual existence.

Great excitement ensued immediately: the news swept abroad

over the whole island that the palladium of the public liberties was lost—maybe treasonably destroyed. Within thirty minutes almost the entire nation were in the court-room—that is to say, the church. The impeachment of the chief magistrate followed, upon Stavely's motion. The accused met his misfortune with the dignity which became his great office. He did not plead, or even argue: he offered the simple defence that he had not meddled with the missing law; that he had kept the State archives in the same candle-box that had been used as their depository from the beginning; and that he was innocent of the removal or destruction of the lost document.

But nothing could save him; he was found guilty of misprision of treason, and was degraded from his office, and all his property confiscated.

The lamest part of the whole shameful matter was the *reason* suggested by his enemies for his destruction of the law, to wit: that he did it to favour Christian, because Christian was his cousin! Whereas Stavely was the only individual in the entire nation who was *not* his cousin. The reader must remember that all of these people are the descendants of half-a-dozen men; that the first crop of children intermarried together and bore grandchildren to the mutineers; that these grandchildren intermarried; after them, great and great-great-grandchildren intermarried; so that to-day everybody is blood-kin to everybody. Moreover, the relationships are wonderfully, even astoundingly, mixed up and complicated. A stranger, for instance, says to an islander—

‘You speak of that young woman as your cousin; a while ago you called her your aunt.’

‘Well, she *is* my aunt, and my cousin, too; and also my step-sister, my niece, my fourth cousin, my thirty-third cousin, my forty-second cousin, my great aunt, my grandmother, my widowed sister-in-law—and next week she will be my wife.’

So the charge of nepotism against the chief magistrate was weak. But no matter, weak or strong, it suited Stavely. Stavely was immediately elected to the vacant magistracy; and oozing reform from every pore, he went vigorously to work. In no long time religious services raged everywhere and unceasingly. By command, the second prayer of the Sunday morning service, which had customarily endured some thirty-five or forty minutes, and had pleaded for the world, first by continent, and then by national and tribal detail, was extended to an hour and a half, and made to include supplications in behalf of the possible peoples in the several planets. Everybody was pleased with this; everybody said, ‘Now, *this* is something *like*.’ By command, the usual three-hour sermons were doubled in length. The nation came in a body to testify

their gratitude to the new magistrate. The old law forbidding cooking on the Sabbath was extended to the prohibition of eating, also. By command, Sunday-school was privileged to spread over into the week. The joy of all classes was complete. In one short month the new magistrate was become the people's idol!

The time was ripe for this man's next move. He began, cautiously at first, to poison the public mind against England. He took the chief citizens aside, one by one, and conversed with them on this topic. Presently, he grew bolder, and spoke out. He said the nation owed it to itself, to its honour, to its great traditions, to rise in its might and throw off 'this galling English yoke.'

But the simple islanders answered—

'We had not noticed that it galled. How does it gall? England sends a ship once in three or four years to give us soap and clothing, and things which we sorely need and gratefully receive; but she never troubles us; she lets us go our own way.'

'She lets you go your own way! So slaves have felt and spoken in all ages! This speech shows how fallen you are, how base, how brutalised you have become under this grinding tyranny! What! has all manly pride forsaken you? Is liberty nothing? Are you content to be a mere appendage to a foreign and hateful sovereignty, when you might rise up and take your rightful place in the august family of nations, great, free, enlightened, independent, the minion of no sceptred master, but the arbiter of your own destiny, and a voice and a power in decreeing the destinies of your sister-sovereignties of the world?'

Speeches like this began to produce an effect by and by. Citizens began to feel the English yoke; they did not know exactly how or whereabouts they felt it; but they were perfectly certain they did feel it. They got to grumbling a good deal, and chafing under their chains, and longing for relief and release. They presently fell to hating the English flag, that sign and symbol of their nation's degradation; they ceased to glance up at it as they passed the capitol, but averted their eyes and grated their teeth; and one morning, when it was found trampled into the mud at the foot of the staff, they left it there, and no man put his hand to it to hoist it again. A certain thing which was sure to happen sooner or later happened now. Some of the chief citizens went to the magistrate by night, and said—

'We can endure this hated tyranny no longer. How can we east it off?'

'By a *coup-d'état*.'

'How?'

‘A *coup-d’état*. It is like this: Everything is got ready, and at the appointed moment I, as the official head of the nation, publicly and solemnly proclaim its independence, and absolve it from allegiance to any and all other powers whatsoever.’

‘That sounds simple and easy. We can do that right away. Then what will be the next thing to do?’

‘Seize all the defences and public properties of all kinds, establish martial law, put the army and navy on a war footing, and proclaim the empire!’

This fine programme dazzled these innocents. They said—

‘This is grand—this is splendid; but will not England resist?’

‘Let her. This rock is a Gibraltar.’

‘True. But about the empire? Do we *need* an empire, and an emperor?’

‘What you *need*, my friends, is unification. Look at Germany; look at Italy. They are unified. Unification is the thing. It makes things dear. That constitutes progress. We must have a standing army, and a navy. Taxes follow, as a matter of course. All these things summed up make grandeur. With unification and grandeur, what more can you want? Very well: only the empire can confer these boons.’

So on December 8, Pitcairn’s Island was proclaimed a free and independent nation; and on the same day the solemn coronation of Butterworth I., Emperor of Pitcairn’s Island, took place, amidst great rejoicings and festivities. The entire nation, with the exception of fourteen persons, mainly little children, marched past the throne in single file, with banners and music, the procession being upwards of ninety feet long; and some said it was as much as three-quarters of a minute passing a given point. Nothing like it had ever been seen in the history of the island before. The public enthusiasm was measureless.

Now straightway imperial reforms began. Orders of nobility were instituted. A minister of the navy was appointed, and the whale-boat put in commission. A minister of war was created, and ordered to proceed at once with the formation of a standing army. A first lord of the treasury was named, and commanded to get up a taxation scheme, and also open negotiations for treaties, offensive, defensive, and commercial, with foreign Powers. Some generals and admirals were appointed; also some chamberlains, some equerries in waiting, and some lords of the bedchamber.

At this point all the material was used up. The Grand Duke of Galilee, minister of war, complained that all the sixteen grown men in the empire had been given great offices, and consequently would not consent to serve in the ranks; wherefore his standing

army was at a standstill. The Marquis of Ararat, minister of the navy, made a similar complaint. He said he was willing to steer the whale-boat himself, but he *must* have somebody to man her.

The emperor did the best he could in the circumstances: he took all the boys above the age of ten years away from their mothers, and pressed them into the army, thus constructing a corps of seventeen privates, officered by one lieutenant-general and two major-generals. This pleased the minister of war, but procured the enmity of all the mothers in the land; for they said their precious ones must now find bloody graves in the fields of war, and he would be answerable for it. Some of the more heart-broken and unappeasable among them lay constantly in wait for the emperor, and threw yams at him, unmindful of the body-guard.

On account of the extreme scarcity of material, it was found necessary to require the Duke of Bethany, postmaster-general, to pull stroke-oar in the navy, and thus sit in the rear of a noble of lower degree—namely, Viscount Canaan, Lord Justice of the Common Pleas. This turned the Duke of Bethany into a tolerably open malcontent and a secret conspirator—a thing which the emperor foresaw, but could not help.

Things went from bad to worse. The emperor raised Nancy Peters to the peerage on one day, and married her the next, notwithstanding, for reasons of State, the Cabinet had strenuously advised him to marry Emmeline, eldest daughter of the Archbishop of Bethlehem. This made trouble in a powerful quarter—the church. The new empress secured the support and friendship of two-thirds of the thirty-six grown women in the nation by absorbing them into her court as maids of honour; but this made deadly enemies of the remaining twelve. The families of the maids of honour soon began to make trouble, because there was now nobody at home to keep house. The twelve snubbed women refused to enter the imperial kitchen as servants; so the empress had to require the Countess of Jericho and other great court dames to fetch water, sweep the palace, and perform other menial and equally distasteful services. This made bad blood in that department.

Everybody fell to complaining that the taxes levied for the support of the army, the navy, and the rest of the imperial establishment were intolerably burdensome, and were reducing the nation to beggary. The emperor's reply 'Look at Germany; look at Italy. Are you better than they? and haven't you unification?'—did not satisfy them. They said, 'People can't eat unification, and we are starving. Agriculture has ceased. Everybody is in the army, everybody is in the navy, everybody is in the

public service, standing around in a uniform, with nothing whatever to do, nothing to eat, and nobody to till the fields.'

'Look at Germany; look at Italy. It is the same there. Such is unification, and there's no other way to get it—no other way to keep it after you've got it,' said the poor emperor always.

But the grumblers only replied, 'We can't *stand* the taxes—we can't *stand* them.'

Now, right on the top of this the Cabinet reported a national debt amounting to upwards of forty-five dollars—half a dollar to every individual in the nation. And they proposed to fund something. They had heard that this was always done in such emergencies. They proposed duties on exports; also on imports. And they wanted to issue bonds; also paper money, redeemable in yams and cabbages in fifty years. They said the pay of the army and of the navy and of the whole governmental machine was far in arrears, and unless something was done, and done immediately, national bankruptcy must ensue, and possibly insurrection and revolution. The emperor at once resolved upon a high-handed measure, and one of a nature never before heard of in Pitcairn's Island. He went in state to the church on Sunday morning, with the army at his back, and commanded the Minister of the Treasury to take up a collection.

That was the feather that broke the camel's back. First, one citizen, and then another, rose and refused to submit to this unheard-of outrage, and each refusal was followed by the immediate confiscation of the malcontent's property. This vigour soon stopped the refusals, and the collection proceeded amid a sullen and ominous silence. As the emperor withdrew with the troops, he said, 'I will teach you who is master here.' Several persons shouted, 'Down with unification!' They were at once arrested and torn from the arms of their weeping friends by the soldiery.

But in the mean time, as any prophet might have foreseen, a social democrat had been developed. As the emperor stepped into the gilded imperial wheelbarrow at the church door, the social democrat stabbed at him fifteen or sixteen times with a harpoon, but fortunately with such a peculiarly social-democratic unprecision of aim as to do no damage.

That very night the convulsion came. The nation rose as one man—though forty-nine of the revolutionists were of the other sex. The infantry threw down their pitchforks; the artillery cast aside their cocoa-nuts; the navy revolted; the emperor was seized, and bound hand and foot in his palace. He was very much depressed. He said—

'I freed you from a grinding tyranny; I lifted you up out of

your degradation, and made you a nation among nations; I gave you a strong, compact, centralised government; and, more than all, I gave you the blessing of blessings—unification. I have done all this, and my reward is hatred, insult, and these bonds. Take me; do with me as ye will. I here resign my crown and all my dignities, and gladly do I release myself from their too heavy burden. For your sake I took them up; for your sake I lay them down. The imperial jewel is no more; now bruise and defile as ye will the useless setting.'

By a unanimous voice the people condemned the ex-emperor and the social democrat to perpetual banishment from church services, or to perpetual service as galley-slaves in the whale-boat—whichever they might prefer. The next day the nation assembled again, and rehoisted the British flag, reinstated the British tyranny, reduced the nobility to the condition of commoners again, and then straightway turned their diligent attention to the weeding of the ruined and neglected yam patches, and the rehabilitation of the old useful industries and the old healing and solacing pieties. The ex-emperor restored the lost trespass law, and explained that he had stolen it—not to injure any one, but to further his political projects. Therefore, the nation gave the late chief magistrate his office again, and also his alienated property.

Upon reflection, the ex-emperor and the social democrat chose perpetual banishment from religious services, in preference to perpetual labour as galley-slaves, '*with* perpetual religious services,' as they phrased it; wherefore the people believed that the poor fellows' troubles had unseated their reason, and so they judged it best to confine them for the present. Which they did.

Such is the quaint and curious history of Pitcairn's 'doubtful acquisition.'

The Daughter of the Dark.

ON the twenty-first of February, 1857, Michael Grame, being then twenty-eight years of age, married, and an engine driver by trade, met with an accident whereby he was permanently disabled. As he was taking his engine out of the shed in the morning a pipe burst, a fragment of the pipe struck his left knee with such violence that when discharged from hospital he limped out with a stiff leg and carried the assurance that his knee would be stiff all his life. The steam had so scalded the right side of his face, that cheek, forehead, and chin were deeply scarred, and, worst of all, the right eye was so injured that the orb had to be removed. After the accident a flaw was discovered in the pipe which had burst. Several complaints had been made of the engine before; the locomotive superintendent was to blame, and through him the company. So, upon Michael Grame signing a document discharging the company of all further responsibility with regard to himself and this accident, they handed his solicitor a cheque for four hundred and fifty pounds as compensation for the injury sustained by him.

The accident was a very sad one, and awoke a good deal of pity for Michael Grame. He had been married just a year to the young daughter of a small shopkeeper in a little Devonshire town. She was still short of twenty. They were both young, and by and by there would, the neighbours and friends said sympathetically, be still younger beings looking to them for bread, and here were his trade and his strength taken from him in one moment, and at such an important period of his life. If the accident had occurred before his marriage, or when his future family were grown up and in the way of doing for themselves, it would be so much easier to bear. Death would have been preferable. That would have left his wife free, with four hundred and fifty pounds, if not more, in hand, and no dread of future responsibilities. What good was four hundred and fifty pounds to them as they were? Neither had the least faculty for business, or knowledge of it. Supposing no children came, the money might last them seven years; but in seven years he would be no more than in his prime, and she still young, and then what should they do?

¶ Much talk took place among the neighbours and friends. In

the end, a further sum of seventy pounds reached them: fifty from a friendly society, and twenty the result of a subscription among the engine drivers and stokers of the company.

Michael Grame took advice of the secretary of the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association, and invested five hundred pounds in an annuity for his wife's life. Thus he was sure they would have forty pounds a year during their joint lives and she the same during her life, should he die first. He could get no more than thirty pounds a year on the two lives, and, as he put it, 'Thirty pounds is neither here nor there for two people, but forty is something. It's queer if after a bit I can't make a few shillings to keep myself and any little ones God may send us, and she'll have all the more for herself and them if I go first.'

When 1877 came round it found Michael Grame's worldly affairs much improved. He was now forty-eight years of age, still childless, and paid secretary of the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association. Before the accident which made him blind of one eye and lame he had been clever and popular among his fellows. As the years went on he had developed and improved mentally, and had gathered to himself the admiration and confidence of the men around him. So that in 1873, the secretary dying, he got the secretaryship with a weekly salary of three pounds.

In 1877 there was no secretary of any branch of a trade's union in London more trusted or respected than Michael Grame. He was low-sized, keen, energetic, pale, slight, light-bearded, and bent. Over the cavity beneath the right eyebrow he wore a black glass to conceal the unpleasant void. Over the other eye he wore an ordinary convex clear glass, for already he was growing long-sighted in the remaining eye. The dark patch made by the one black glass lent his countenance a grotesque and whimsical appearance. Even those who knew him best and were in the habit of meeting him daily could never fully divest their minds of the idea that the spectacles with the odd glasses were assumed for a joke, and that sooner or later Michael Grame would indicate the way in which the joke lay. When strangers met him they were always inclined to laugh, and generally did smile, at the deliberate comicality of his face.

But Michael Grame's joke never came, his face never relaxed. In all London it would be hard to find one man whose views of life and things were so sincerely grave. In his youth he had been ardent and melancholic. His dreadful accident and years had tended to discipline his enthusiasm. He was religious without using any special forms of religion, puritanical without a code,

sincere out of his natural temperament, and grave out of an unformulated theory that men who are not grave must be rascals.

For a man of his position and opportunities he was well informed. In speech and manner he was thoughtful and prudent. Now and then the fiery ardour of a reformer would break out in him, and for a few moments he would fill his listening fellows with wonder and send them away mentally reeling under the weight of some startling novelty in thought. He would sit still and talk most cautiously for an hour, then all at once, and just before departing, fling out some tremendous principle, or suggestion, or doubt, and then retire, leaving his astonished fellows gasping in the presence of some revolutionary principle which seemed to threaten all order that is, and to leave society once more in the chaos of barbarism.

From the day of his appointment as secretary to the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association the influence of this man spread and grew. Incapacitated himself from labour, and yet closely allied to his old companions, his whole soul went into the work at his feet.

The duties of his office absorbed only a drop in the ocean of his activity. Hither and thither he wandered, among others of his kind, and those who, though not of his kind, were still allied to the branch of labour he represented. He was an apostle of progress and preached the nobility of the future.

During the years intervening between 1857 and 1873 he had led a restless and unsettled life, now trying one thing, now another; succeeding in picking up a few shillings a week, and giving all his spare time to reading in the line of his favourite study. All the sincerity of his nature had been wrapped up in the circle of his reading. No natural outlet presented itself to the enthusiasm of his nature. Like an internal fire of earth, he was always wandering about in search of some vent for his pent-up activity, and never finding any more capacious crater than a fierce shout of approval at democratic sentiments uttered in speeches by popular leaders, or his own furious and somewhat incoherent attacks upon the system then governing the regulation of labour. He did not side exactly with the republican element of the country. He did not care in the least what the form of government, so long as the hard-working honest man got his rights. He was anti-employer and not anti-king; he had the most complete belief in his own theory, the most sincere conviction that he was right and all opposed to him not only wrong but wickedly and stubbornly wrong—wrong to the ruin of the individual, the country, and the vital principle of the Christian creed.

Once invested with influence and power, as secretary to the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association, he found it necessary to curb the violence of his feelings for fear of causing mischief to others, and out of a belief that his words would largely and perhaps injuriously affect the acts and fortunes of those around him, since to his words would be affixed a semi-official value, and he would seem to speak with the authority of the Society.

Early in the October of 1877 Michael Grame became gradually busier and busier day by day, until his home saw little or nothing of him from early morning till late at night. He lived in one of the houses in that long road on the west side of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, between Herne Hill and Coldharbour Lane.

His absence from home at this time was particularly trying to his wife, for, although still childless, there was at last, to the great joy of himself and his wife Helen, the prospect of a change in this state of things.

Mrs. Grame was very far from strong, and those around her felt most anxious about her. Her married sister had promised to come a little later on, but up to the early part of October the household of the Grames consisted of Grame, his wife, and a young servant girl not more than seventeen years of age, named Emily.

It was very hard upon Mrs. Grame to sit up, often until after midnight, for him; nothing could persuade her to go to bed before he had shut up the house for the night. To sit up for him had been a habit of twenty years, and she could not put it away now, although it sorely taxed her strength. What added to the difficulties of her position, and gave her anxiety of mind to increase her distress of body, was that for the first time in all their married life he had placed a limit to his confidences.

When he came back late he made vague replies. When he went out early he made vague excuses. Of nights he said merely he 'could not get back earlier,' or 'business kept him.' Of mornings he 'wanted to be off early,' he 'had a day full of work' before him.

Once when he came home later than usual, she, being weak and full of disquietude on account of him, reproached him with growing weary of an ailing wife.

He went to her and sat down beside her and took her hand and stroked it softly. He pushed back the thin black hair from the faded weak face, and taking the face softly between his hands, kissed it, saying very gently but very firmly:—

"To-night I was at the London Gas Stokers' Society, and they

kept me very late, for the thing is of importance, and I am doing most of the work.'

'What thing? what is of importance?'

'It is a secret. I must not tell even you. I am arranging it all with them—with the committees and secretaries. We are all bound to keep the matter private even from our wives.'

'Then it must be a thing of no good—no good for the wives, any way.'

'Yes, it will be good for all working men and their wives and families and fortunes, and,' he rose and drew himself up to the full height of his stunted figure, 'it was *I* first thought of it; *I*, I tell you, *I*, Michael Grame, your husband, am organising it. Do you hear that, Helen?'

'The what?' she asked quickly, trying to take him off his guard.

'The ——,' he paused in time, and looked at her half angrily, half reproachfully. The enthusiasm of the man had been kindled as he spoke, and his imagination had almost betrayed him into forgetting his pledge. He turned to her sharply and said, 'Go to bed. You must not wait up again. I shall be busier and busier and busier as the time for the Grand Stroke comes on. You must sit up no more.'

In a reverie, and quite ignoring her presence, he continued—his one eye burning and fixed into space, the gas-light shining on the black glass over the vacant socket, and through the darkened glass a pool of livid shadow striking on his hollow cheek amid the scanty growth of grizzling hairs—'We have them all now, all we want—the Gas Stokers, the Horse Drivers, the Postal Telegraph, the River Craft, the Wapping Seafarers. All! all!'

He was not addressing his wife. He was under no delusion that he spoke to one of the meetings. He was simply reviewing for his personal gratification some fragment of his own creation and ordering. He continued:—

'I got them together. I brought them to see something was needed. Then I told them of the scheme I have had so long in my head. At first they were frightened and held back. But I worked on and spoke and spoke and spoke until they listened. And now it is going to be as I designed it. Do you hear that?'

He brought down his hand with such violence on the table that Mrs. Grame uttered a low cry of surprise. Turning almost furiously upon her he shouted, 'Good heavens, woman, are you there still! did I not tell you to go to bed?'

She rose and crept from the room and went to bed in the dark. She lay thinking long before she could sleep. While she lay awake

she was afraid to cry, lest he might hear her sobs and come up ; afraid to weep, lest when he came he might see her tears. At last she fell asleep ; her reason no longer held back her tears, and they burst through her lids. And later still she sobbed in her sleep. He heard her, and came up softly and held a candle above her face, and listened and watched until he knew she slept. Then he blew out the candle, put it on the table, and throwing up his hands towards heaven whispered, through his set teeth, 'My God ! can I have let the secret slip ? if so, all is lost !'

Next morning his wife was stirring before he awoke. When he came down she looked careworn and haggard. She moved about him with fear and a clinging solicitude. She watched every movement of his as though he were a child walking among sleeping snakes. At last when he was about to leave, he turned to her and said :—

'Helen, I was talking aloud before I went up-stairs last night. It's a foolish habit and a bad one. I was greatly excited and worn out. Did I then tell you what I am organising ?'

'No,' in a faint, tremulous tone.

'Because I came up and found you sobbing in your sleep.'

'I was only frightened ; I do not know what is going to happen, but I fear something dreadful. Won't you keep out of it for my sake—for the sake of——'

'Hush ! good morning, Helen ; take care of yourself. I'll try and be in early to-night. Not a word of all this to any one, mind ! I rely on you to hold your tongue.' And he was gone.

That evening he did return sooner than usual, and made exceptional efforts to be soothing and interesting. When eleven o'clock came he said to her, 'I am in to-night, and it's quite time you were in bed. Go.'

She took a candle up. He went to her and put his right arm round her and kissed her. 'Helen, I hope you will sleep well to-night : no more sobbing. There is nothing to be afraid of : you may be quite sure of that. We must have your sister as soon as ever she can come to keep you company. Do you know you sobbed so loud in your sleep last night that I heard you down here quite distinctly. Do I speak now often in my sleep as I used long ago ?'

'Not often.'

'But when I do I make long speeches, as if I was at a meeting, like I used always ?'

'Oh, no ! not so long as that.'

'I know, not so long ; but as sensible, as well put together ? I mean with sense, you know ?'

'Yes : quite sensible.'

‘ Well, good-night now. Go to sleep soon ; and mind, no fretting to-night.’

She went to bed, but her sleep was light and broken. She woke, and while she lay awake one o’clock struck. He had not come up yet. She dozed again. Once more she woke. Still he had not come up. She lay a long while fearing, trembling. Four o’clock struck. Four o’clock, and he not come up yet ! There must be something wrong.

Pale and half sick with dread, she got up, lighted a candle, threw a shawl round her, opened the door and descended the stairs.

All was still in the house, but from the sitting room where she had left her husband, came the low murmur of a human voice—the voice of her husband.

She stooped down and looked in at the keyhole. The light was out. She put her ear to the keyhole. Yes—the slow speech, the thick articulation, the end of sentences in disorder. He was speaking in his sleep.

She became alarmed. Why had he gone to sleep there ? Why had he not come up to bed ?

She turned the handle and entered the room. Shading the light with her hand she advanced. All in the room was as she had left it, except that a chair had been turned feet up on the hearth rug, and a pillow taken from the easy chair and placed upon the slanting back of the chair. With his head on this pillow, and his body covered with a travelling rug, lay Michael Grame asleep, and speaking softly in his sleep.

The woman held the candle high aloft, but on one side, so that the light might not fall upon the face of her husband. He lay on his back ; he had removed his spectacles, and his thin worn face looked all the more cadaverous for the loss of the motley glasses. His brows were knit, his cheeks pinched, and his lips drawn closely across his teeth.

For a moment he remains silent. Then, with a slight tremor and a painful twitch of all the features, the lips come together, and he begins speaking again with a thick tongue.

She can hear every word. The words have a terrible effect on her. She bends forward, thrusts the candle as far as she can behind her, and remains fixed as the sculpture on a tomb.

Gradually as she listens her mouth opens, her teeth protrude, her eyebrows creep up her forehead, her eyes become fixed and staring. She seems transfixed by terror.

He ceases to speak. His mouth closes, a smile of triumph comes over his face. She knows his habits. He will fall into a

profound and quiet sleep now. She straightens herself slowly and as though her joints were half-frozen, blows out the candle, crawls out of the room, shutting the door softly after her, and steals silently upstairs and into bed.

She covers up her head. She feels she must speak or die. 'Have mercy on my husband,' she prays, 'have mercy on my husband, and have pity on me and—my child!'

It is daylight before she uncovers her head. She looks around cautiously, and then fearfully covers up her head again. He has not come up yet. She shivers and moans softly, but does not weep, utters no word. She has not slept since; she does not sleep now. At seven o'clock she hears a foot on the stairs, the handle of the door turns, and she knows he is in the room. She affects to be asleep. He looks at the bed, sees that her head is covered, and seems disturbed at this. He approaches and turns down the counterpane. She affects to awake, and looks up. He regards her with doubt and disturbance.

'You dressed very quietly, Michael,' she says, trying to force a smile. 'I did not hear you dressing.'

'How long have you been awake?'—apparently taking little interest in the question, so little interest that he does not seem to care whether she answers or not. Then he notices that his pillow is untossed, his night-shirt still folded. For a moment he is in a rage that he did not steal up while she slept and rumple the pillow and unfold the shirt, so that it might seem to her he had come to bed late, while she was sleeping, and had risen early, before she was awake. In another moment he thinks, 'She cannot but have noticed the pillow. She is looking at it now. Why does she make no remark?'

Suddenly a thought breaks in upon him, and he seems rooted to the spot. Why did she look so scared? The night before he had heard her sobbing in her bed while he was in the room downstairs. Could he have spoken in his sleep last night, she heard him, come down and listened, as he had gone up and listened?

'Helen,' he says, without moving a limb, 'do you know where I slept last night?'

'Oh, Michael!'

'Answer me, woman—answer me, do you hear?'

'Yes, Michael.'

'You came down and heard me speak, and are afraid?'

'Michael, for the sake of me and your unborn child——'

'Stop, don't stir till I come back. Do you hear me, woman?'

He leaves the room. With lips still parted, as when his

words had broken in upon her piteous appeal, she lies breathing heavily, her eyes staring and fixed, and seemingly kept open by no other force than a wild final curiosity to see the means by which they are to be closed up for ever.

She does not speak with her lips, but the voice of her dread is loud in her ears. 'When he comes back he will kill—us.'

She lies awhile breathing heavily. At length she hears his tread upon the stairs. She does not think of praying; she will think only of him just now, until the fatal blow is struck. Then she will close her eyes on him and the world, and, taking the spirit of the child by the hand, set out for the gardens of eternal summer, where she shall see her own playing with the others in the shade; there, in the eternal groves, to guard their child, to pass away the period of her widowhood, until in after ages he comes to her and tells his sorrow, and asks her pardon for this blow.

He is at her bedside once more. She does not move her eyes. She knows what is coming, and all her curiosity is gone.

'Helen,'—his voice is very grave and solemn—'give me your right hand:' she does so, and he places it on something cold and smooth. He continues, 'Your hand is now on the Book. Swear to me that, no matter what you heard last night—I do not want you to tell me what it was, but swear to me with your hand on the Book that to living being you will never breathe what you heard. Swear that. If you don't swear and keep your oath you will ruin the great object of my life.'

'But murder will come of what you spoke about last night, and they will hang you. Hang my Michael, and *now*!'

'Swear, I say, woman, and swear at once. I can stay no longer. I have business away from this. Swear, I say.'

'I swear.'

'Kiss the Book. That will do. Now I must go. Remember: not a word. Your sister, Jane Ilford, will be here to-morrow. I shall be late to-night. Remember your oath, Helen Grame.' And he is gone.

When she is alone, she lies half stunned. He has not struck that blow, and yet she feels half dead already. She would have preferred the blow, the complete oblivion, and then the watching of the child in the garden of eternal summers until he came once more with sorrow and with love.

This day was Thursday, the eleventh of October 1877. It was a very busy day indeed with Michael Grame. As he had said in his speech addressed to vacancy, but spoken in the presence of his wife, they had all now come into his view, and were prepared to act upon his advice in his master-stroke against capital. He had for months

been elaborately preparing for the great event, an event which would form an era in the history of labour writhing under the tyranny of capital. No such terrible lesson had ever been dealt to insolent employers, unprincipled masters, as he had prepared for them. When his blow fell it would not fall upon one trade, one branch of industry alone, but, like an Egyptian plague, upon millions of people. So splendid and complete a scheme had never in the history of man been designed or executed. It was a double-edged sword ; it would wound the employers and the public at the one blow. It would not only show the employers that they depend solely upon the honest sons of toil, but prove to the selfish public that the working men command the situation, and can mar or make the whole community by one concerted act.

All the great efforts of labour against capital had up to this been piecemeal and non-apparent to the consumer. Labour had paltered with capital. Why should this be? Why should not labour act for one week as though capital did not exist? That would show the world—the world not of legislators and political economists and employers, but the whole world, from the prince to the crossing sweeper—that all the business of the human race, all that was really vital to the existence of the people and the glory of the State, depended not upon this man or that man, this clique or that clique, but upon the working man, upon labour. To confederate that labour, and to make it speak in a voice which the rudest and the most refined could understand, had been the dream of his life, and now, at last, after years of thought and care, and months of ceaseless labour day and night, he, he the poor ex-engine-driver, had the lesson ready. Within three weeks Man should read that lesson through dilated eyes. Around four millions of people he would draw his mighty *cordon*, and in the consternation of four millions, and the amazement of the world, he would set up the might of labour once and for all, to be a beacon to the oppressed and a warning to the oppressor as long as the history of our days should last.

When two nations, or two parties of the one nation, took up arms against one another and were at war, did the German general send word to the French, did the Confederate announce to the Federal leader, ‘Sir, I shall attack the heights you occupy on Wednesday?’ ‘Sir, I shall make a sally in force on Friday night?’ Nothing of the kind. When the general intended to storm the heights, he made a feint in the plain. When the besieged leader designed a sally, he affected timidity and the airs of capitulation. Then, as soon as each had done all he could to deceive his opponent, he dashed at his object with his whole force.

One of the mightiest engines of successful generalship was surprise. Why should the unarmed strife between muscle and money be conducted on different principles? If labour intended to deal a great blow, why should the blow always be preceded by a herald announcing the coming of the blow? The custom was absurd, and it had fallen to his fate to prove to labour the folly of parley.

True, in the course he had advocated, in the course he had compelled, there was risk, fearful risk. In his sleep last night on the hearth-rug no doubt he had unfolded to his listening wife the scheme upon which all his faculties were now concentrated. No doubt in that dangerous sleep-talk of his he had adverted to the perils of his plan, and so terrified his wife. But he had estimated all the risks, calculated all the cost, and decided with mature deliberation. She was only a woman, and because of her sex timid and ignorant of the vastness of the issue he was about to put to the test. But nothing venture, nothing win. Without risk, without great risk, no great thing was ever gained. No great concession was ever obtained, no great new principle ever established without a hazard of complementary value.

Wrong's difficulty was Right's opportunity. Capital had been in the wrong for years. It had been attacked only in shreds and patches. Let him succeed in his present scheme, and he should not only have capital in a difficulty, but he should have four millions of people at one stroke against capital and with him! No doubt there were various members of the committees, and even a few of the delegates, who thought the people would not without exception take his side. Surely all honest folk would side with him and right against the employers and wrong. Anyway, if they did not side with him, they could do nothing without him; he should hold the key of the position, he should be the Napoleon of the hour, and yield he would never until he had ample guarantee of a substantial and enduring redress of grievances.

At the end of Shakespeare Road comes Coldharbour Lane. He turned down Coldharbour Lane and walked on until he came to Loughborough Junction; here he took the train to the Viaduct. He crossed the Viaduct on foot, descended the Viaduct steps on the northern side, and proceeded up Farringdon Street. In Farringdon Street are situated the hall and offices of the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association.

In the course of that day he was visited by the delegates of no fewer than five of the most important branches of labour in London. With each delegate he had a long secret interview. To each he

said almost the same words at parting, 'We have decided to act on Saturday next three weeks. Let there be no backwardness in your preparations. Saturday three weeks without fail. We shall make that day memorable in the history of England. It will be the day from which the emancipation of labour shall date hereafter. All will have to act at five minutes past twelve on the morning of Friday three weeks. We will have a meeting on Thursday previous to the blow. Once the blow is struck we can dictate our terms. God prosper the cause!'

On the twelfth of October Mrs. Ilford, Mrs. Grame's married sister, arrived at Grame's house, Shakespeare Road, and took up her residence there. This was a great relief to Michael Grame. It seemed to absolve him from the greater portion of the responsibility in his home affairs. The two sisters occupied the one room, and he now came in so late of nights that he could not disturb them. He admitted himself by latch-key, and crept quietly to bed in a little return room which had been fitted up for him. In the morning he went into his wife's room after breakfast—she did not get up to breakfast, as the weather was bad. During these visits he always contrived that the sister should be present, so that any reference to the circumstances of the eleventh was impossible.

All this pressed heavily upon the wife. She durst not even hint to her sister at any cause of uneasiness. Her sister was neither lymphatic nor discreet; and if she said anything in her sister's presence that seemed to imply she had any cause of mental anxiety, the chances were the matter would in some way get to his ears, and then farewell to confidence and happiness for ever. So the weary time went by, day after day of dull anxiety. She did not know when the plan of her husband was to be put in force, every day it might be to-day: so that she crawled about the house momentarily expecting to hear the shouts of a tumult and see the signs of order broken loose.

On Thursday night, the first of November, Michael Grame did not get home until past midnight. He let himself in with his latch-key. His wife, sister-in-law, and servant were in bed. The gas was burning in the bright tidy little hall. Shakespeare Road was as quiet as a wilderness, save for the occasional passing of a late train. Michael Grame carried a bundle, which he deposited on the hall table. Then going to the return room he lay down, and was soon asleep. On Friday morning he was up at seven. His sister-in-law came down to give him his breakfast, for he had informed her before leaving for the City on the previous day that he should want to be out of the house by half-past seven on Friday

morning. While they were at breakfast he turned to her and said :—

‘ Jane, I have a particular reason for asking—for telling—you not to light any gas in this house from the time I leave until I come back again. Remember, I have a reason for telling you this, and you will tell Helen I told you so and that it is to be so. I brought a package of candles from town to-day; they are on the hall table, I left them there last night. Use them instead of gas, until I come back. Mind, until I come back. You will also get in a week’s supply of everything we want or are likely to want. Here is money. Will that be enough money?’

She took the money and looked at it carefully, curiously, as though she but vaguely comprehended his words. Why did he give such orders? and why did he give such orders to her? was not his wife upstairs? She said merely, ‘ This will be enough for a week. But won’t you go up and see Helen before you leave to-day?’

‘ No. I am not going up. And mark me, it is for her welfare I am doing all this. I am her husband, you are her sister, we are bound to take care of her, and to use our best judgment for her, and I am the judge of what is best; and this is best, and you will do it. She is delicate now, and her very life may be in danger if the thing that is best for her peace and her welfare is not done by us. The whole weight of her life is upon you, Jane, and me. In this matter I take the responsibility of deciding what is best to be done, and upon your head I leave the responsibility of carrying out my decision. Should she make any remark about the gas, say it is cut off. She is too weak to try, and I accept the responsibility of the lie—if lie there is in this.’

His sister-in-law stood staring at him in speechless wonder. She was divided between two dreads, one that her brother-in-law had gone mad, the other that her brother-in-law was still sane. She did not know which to fear most. If there were any sense in what he was saying, what dreadful things were going to happen? if he were suffering from some kind of delusion, what would become of her sister? Any way, sane or mad, it was better to promise and, moreover, to do what he asked. Anything and everything should be faced to keep the poor feeble woman upstairs quiet. Her only reply was, ‘ Very well, Michael.’

‘ And, Jane, more than all that I have said to you, you are to remember what I am now going to say: if Helen heard from you anything of what I have been telling you, it might kill her and her unborn child as dead as though she were a twelvemonth in her grave. That is all I have to say to you now. I leave you, and

I leave her life on your hands—on your head. I shall be very late to-night. I don't know when I shall be back. As I told you before, no one is to wait up. I shall go now; recollect all I have said. I leave her life in your hands—on your head.'

With these words he left his house in Shakespeare Road.

Having walked to Loughborough Junction, he took his seat in a train to the Viaduct.

A group of men and a vast mass of business awaited his arrival at the office. It was past noon before he could get himself free for a few moments. Then he stole quickly and quietly out of the office, jumped into a hansom cab, and told the man to drive half-way down Chancery Lane.

He muses, 'There is no knowing what may happen, so it is better to draw it out. The fortnight's notice is up to-day. It would not do to lose it—to lose all I have in the world, now, too, when a little one is coming to us at last.'

The cab pulls up. He alights and walks quickly down a street off Chancery Lane. He enters a large building and presents a paper at a counter. It is marked and returned to him. He presents it at another counter, saying 'Gold' in a low voice. The clerk counts the sum out, weighs it, and shovels it across to him. He counts it, and says 'One hundred and twenty-five; thank you, it's all right.'

He pours the money into a leather bag, drops the bag into his trousers pocket, and, having left the bank, hails another cab and drives rapidly back to the office in Farringdon Street.

It is now past one in the afternoon.

At three the final meeting of the delegates is to take place at the offices, Farringdon Street. The meeting lasts until five. It is almost stormy, and all Michael Grame's eloquence and earnestness are necessary to keep the delegates up to the necessary degree of firmness and resolution. The fact is, contradictory rumours are afloat about an opposition demonstration. As yet these rumours seem no more than idle talk of the timid; still, they indicate a want of unanimity among the classes concerned.

At half-past five, Michael Grame having dismissed the delegates, and feeling faint, goes down Farringdon Street, turns up Fleet Street, and enters a tavern. Here he orders a chop and a pint of stout.

"'Globe,' sir," says the waiter, handing him the paper. "'Globe,' sir, special. We're going to have something queer on to-night, sir, if the "Globe" is right. Look there, sir.' The man puts his finger on a paragraph as he hands the paper to Michael Grame.

The paragraph runs as follows:—

We understand that, owing to discontent among some branches of the industrial classes, they have resolved to take quite a novel way of appealing not only to their employers but to the general public as well. We are given to believe the scheme of the agitators will be put in operation this night, and that its effects will be the most astonishing ever experienced at a time of peace in any great modern city. About this design peculiar secrecy is observed. Should we be able to obtain any further information, it will appear in our later editions.

With a complacent smile Michael Grame puts down the paper and begins his dinner. The hour of his triumph and his fame is nigh at hand. He feels his blood swell in his veins. His heart beats lightly, the lamp of his imagination blazes up in the garden of his dreams, and he sees visions of his own triumphal progress, and hears echoes of shouts of acclaim.

The chop and the pint of stout are gone. Such an evening as this deserves a deeper honouring; it is now half-past six. A deeper honouring, yes—‘Waiter, a pint of pale sherry and a cigar; a later edition of the “Globe,” if it is out.’

‘Yes, sir, here’s the “Globe.” Half-crown sherry, yes, sir. “Further particulars.”’

The waiter puts down the sherry and goes away. Michael Grame’s hand trembles with excitement as he pours out a glass of the wine and raises it to his lips before looking at the paper. Usually he is a water-drinker: the stout has made him feel warm and comfortable. The biting heat of the sherry diffuses a quick thrill of delight through his frame. He swallows the contents of the glass and then takes up the paper.

His eyes light on two words, and everything else on the sheet is nothing. The two words are ‘Michael Grame!’

This is the crowning moment of his life. He feels the bays of fame upon his forehead. All London is talking of him now; all the world shall talk of him by and by. And all London shall not only talk of him, but shall talk well of him, shall rend the clouds with his name! Oh! consummation of all his hopes, supreme deliverance of the conception of a lifetime! Oh! gladness of a holy triumph!

He drinks another glass of the sherry before reading the new paragraph. The latest intelligence in the ‘Globe’ is contained in a few words, but the words are full of grave significance:—

We have gathered a little additional news of the coming protest. So far as we are able to judge, the demonstration will take more the form of a *coup* than we first indicated. Mr. Michael Grame, Secretary of the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers’ Association, has organised the scheme. The police are already adopting precautions.

‘The police!’ mutters Michael Grame in bland condescension; ‘the police! they are about as powerful against my plan as the smoke of this cigar against a whirlwind!’

He drinks the sherry quickly. His face is now becoming flushed and his eye excited; red lines frame the scar upon his cheek; the centre of the scar grows deadly white. At ordinary times the blackened glass covering the cavity under the eyebrow looks dark and cold, now it catches and reflects the glowing hues beneath and around it, and shines like iron at a dull red heat.

Michael Grame sits drinking the unaccustomed sherry and smoking unaccustomed cigars until half-past seven. When he rises to go he feels a slight sense of dissatisfaction with himself for having tarried so long, and added the sherry to the stout. No doubt he required the stout to strengthen him and take the ragged edges off his nerves so that they might not jar at every contact, but now he experiences a dissatisfying suspicion that he has been guilty of an excess, an excess too in the supreme passage of his life, and when any moment may bring him grave news of his wife’s condition.

But when he reaches the keen exterior air, and feels it cool and freshen him, he loses all sense of uneasiness, and walks swiftly and eagerly back to the office in Farringdon Street, there to await the maturing of his great plan, and to see and talk to such men as may seek him for instruction or counsel.

A number of men are in his office; many have grave, earnest faces, many like himself are a little flushed and excited.

At half-past eleven most of the men have left. Some have departed to their allotted posts, some to their homes, several into the streets to see the effect of the titanic blow.

At half-past eleven on this same night, Mrs. Ilford sends in all haste a messenger into town for Michael Grame. There is no unexpected alarm at the house in Shakespeare Road, but the long-anticipated event is at hand, and it is most desirable that the master of the house should be at home. The messenger is the little maid-of-all-work, and she goes with speed to the Brixton Station, and there takes the train to Ludgate Hill. It is close upon midnight before she reaches Farringdon Street. She passes under the Viaduct on her way to the office, where Michael Grame now sits all by himself.

At two minutes past twelve Michael Grame stands up and lights four candles that stand on the writing table. Then he sits down in his elbow chair smoking a cigar and staring into the gas-lamp on the table.

At five minutes past twelve the flame of the gas changes from

pale yellow to faint blue. Soon the flames grow shorter and thinner. He smiles at it a smile of comprehension and satisfaction. In three minutes more the flame flickers, jumps, flickers, and—— goes out !

With a wild shout of triumph he springs to his feet and rushes to the window. His gait is not quite steady. He must have been drinking since he left Fleet Street. He catches hold of the sash, steadies himself, draws up the blind, and looks out.

All over London at this moment has fallen a sudden pall of darkness. Not a gas jet burns in chamber or street. The gas stokers all over London have struck, and at the same instant turned off the gas !

At this moment, pale and trembling with terror, the little maid messenger from Shakespeare Road opens the door of Michael Grame's office and enters the room. Seeing no one in the room but him, she is a little reassured ; she hastens to him and puts her hand on his shoulder. He turns round, swaying unsteadily to and fro, recognises her, and seizing her by the shoulder calls out in a hoarse thick voice :—

‘ Do you see that black darkness ?—I made it ! Do you remark that silence ?—that is mine too. But these are only parts of my work. That darkness and that silence are designed by me to compel justice, to make the driver of white slaves feel the power of the slaves, and to show those who use the handiwork of white slaves that the slaves have power over their own handiwork, that they can withhold their own handiwork if they choose ! ’

The girl looks into the dense darkness in terror, then at him in fear. That darkness is no more to her than the hideous cavern of night, through which she has to regain her home, miles out among ghostly houses ; this man is to her only her mistress's husband, who has been drinking, and who is saying wild things, and for whom she has been sent in hot haste. Her throat is dry and her lips feel thick with dread, but she contrives to whisper :—

‘ Master, missus is bad, and missus's sister says, sir, would you please come home at once. ’

He passes one hand across his flushed forehead, and with the other steadies himself by the window frame. Then looking heavily at the girl he says :—

‘ My wife is bad ! Now, what do you mean by saying my wife is bad ? Is it only what we have been expecting ? ’

‘ That's all, sir ; but will you please to come at once : missus is bad—and—and—and I am frightened to go by myself. ’ Here the girl covers her face with her hands and bursts into sobs.

There is something in the coincidence of this news coming at this time which arouses a strange conflict in Michael Grame's heart. Here is he to-night in the City surrounded by the accumulated triumph of a lifetime. There, beyond the river, far away through the thick darkness of his own creation, the hope of years is about to be fulfilled; all that can be done for the cause is now effected, as far as his part is concerned. There is nothing more for him to do in town to-night. He would like to stay and watch the progress of his victory—but his wife? For a few moments he is plunged in a torrent of conflicting thoughts. Then he shakes himself, drops one hand from his forehead, and the other from the window frame, and says to the girl:—

‘Come, Em’ly, I will go at once with you. We are yet in time to catch the twelve-twenty-four from Ludgate.’ Although his purpose is clear to him, his memory of recent things is almost wholly obscured.

Seizing the girl by the arm, partly to steady himself and partly to guide her through the deep darkness of the way, Michael Grame hastens down Farringdon Street in the direction of Ludgate Hill railway station.

The girl is too much terrified to notice anything but the hideous darkness and the appalling silence. He has now only the one thought in his head—to get home, and to get home quickly. Some terror of the enormity of his own act has stolen in upon him at last.

They reach Ludgate Hill railway station and enter it. He goes to the ticket-box. Shut! What's the matter? A porter answers,

‘The strike. All the drivers struck at twelve.’

‘So they did,’ mutters Michael Grame. ‘So they did. It was part of my scheme, of course; but my head is confused. I have been working too hard. I’ve had too much mental strain of late. Of course, they have struck.’

‘Oh! master, what shall we do? and missus bad, and all the lights of London out, and all the trains stopped!’

‘Hush, Em’ly, hush, my good girl! I’ll make it all right. I’ll call a cab. We shall go home by cab.’ He then goes out of the station into the station-yard. No cab! They pass into the roadway. He puts his hands to his mouth trumpet-wise and shouts, ‘Hansom—Fourwheeler.’ There is not a soul in view, not a footfall in his ears. ‘My God!’ he cries, ‘I have forgotten the cabs have struck too!’

‘Oh! master, what will become of us? Can’t we take the ’bus or tram

‘Girl, they have all struck—all the men that drive for hire in London. Come, there is nothing for it but to walk.’

‘Oh! we shall never get home,’ cries the girl, ‘and missus will be dead of fright. Couldn’t you send a message to her, sir? couldn’t you send a telegram? we can’t be home for better than an hour. She’ll be dead with fright.’

He pauses to think a moment; puts his hand to his head again, and tries to think. At length he whispers into the girl’s ear, ‘No, I can’t telegraph; I’m not sure that the Camberwell office is open so late; anyway, there is no one in any telegraph office in London now. They, like the engine-drivers and cab-drivers, are all gone too. Come, let us walk.’

The girl moans and clings to him, and they walk on towards Blackfriars Bridge. He is unsteady, and she is weak from terror; as they enter upon the bridge she feels that it will take them hours to get home. She is afraid to leave him, and yet, in her faithful pity for the wife of the man, she would risk anything to send news of him to her.

‘Master, couldn’t we get some one to run on and say we are safe? It would be so good for missus to know; then we could take our time and go home at our ease.’

He has forgotten his own precaution about the candles. He sees something in what she says. But where are they to get a messenger? The place is quite deserted; they are now about half-way over the bridge. He hears men talking across the way; he cannot see any one, but he hears the voices. He tells her to wait where she is, and he will try to get a messenger among the men over the way.

He crosses, and finds three men in one of the recesses. They are close together.

‘Will one of you run out to my place in Shakespeare Road, Herne Hill, as fast as you can, with a message?’

‘How much will you give?’ asks a gruff harsh voice.

‘Half-a-crown.’

‘Not good enough: we’re on strike too, ain’t we, pals?’ This is evidently regarded as a fine stroke of wit, for all laugh loudly. That laugh tears harshly through the mortal stillness of the hour. There is no sound of vehicle, or of steam-engine, or of footsteps; nothing disturbs the muffling pall of silence but the lapping of the river on the Surrey shore, the faint weird whispers the water makes around the piers of the bridge, and this odious laugh of these three unseen men.

‘Well, half-a-sovereign if you do it in three-quarters of an hour,’ answers Michael Grame, who, considering all he has done

for men, thinks it hard that he should be obliged to haggle with these as to price.

‘Show us the time and your money,’ says the biggest of the three men. Michael Grame can now see the outline of the upper portions of the figures of the three men against the sky.

‘Here are wax matches,’ says Michael Grame, ‘strike one.’

One of the men, not the tallest, strikes a match, and, shading it in his hat, holds it inside the parapet. Michael Grame pulls the bag out of his trousers pocket, opens it, pours the gold into his hand, and, having selected half-a-sovereign, returns the rest of the gold to the bag, and then the bag to his pocket. Holding up the half-sovereign between his finger and thumb in the light of the match he says, ‘Will that satisfy you? Now I’ll show you the time.’

‘Thank you,’ says the tallest of the three men, taking the half-sovereign; ‘this will do on account; but we’ll find the time ourselves. We’re on strike too’—the match is out—‘that’s a specimen of our strike.’ Michael Grame reels beneath a blow, and suffocates under the pressure of an arm drawn violently around his neck. He feels a tug at his watch-chain and a tear at the pocket where he has put the gold; then he becomes unconscious.

‘He ain’t dead?’

‘No.’

‘What’ll we do with him?’

‘Shy him over. He don’t deserve to live. Took us for honest working men, damned if he didn’t! Shy him over, I say. He took us for honest working men, so I say he don’t deserve to live, and shy him over.’

‘Give him one chance—shy him clear of the bridge.’

‘Well, I’m agreeable. One chance. Shy him clear. One, two, three—now!’

Splash-sh-sh.

‘Oh master! Oh master!’

‘There’s a woman over there. Let’s run.’

Next day, Saturday, the ‘Evening Standard’ had the longest and best accounts of the events of the previous eighteen hours. The following is a condensation of the newspaper description.

Obedient to a secret plan of long standing, at midnight yesterday the greatest strike London has ever known commenced. Beyond some vague hints in a contemporary, the public knew nothing of the impending calamity until the gas of all the city suddenly went out at a few minutes past twelve o’clock. Alarmed by this terrible event, people rushed from their houses to learn the cause and seek an explanation. They were met by news which may fairly be said to have paralysed the stoutest hearts. The facts were briefly these:—An

arrangement had been come to between the Independent Metropolitan Engine Drivers' Association, the London Gas Stokers' Society, the Universal London Horse Drivers' Association, the Postal Telegraph Hand-in-hand Amalgamation, the River Craft Union, and the Wapping Institute for the Protection of Seafaring Men, that each and all of these would at twelve o'clock midnight on the second of November strike without making any previous notification of their resolution to their employers. At the time appointed this fearful conception was carried into effect. It was the intention of the working men, or rather a small section of their leaders carried away by the eloquence and persuasion of one man, to aim forcibly by this means at their employers, and at the same time to place before the general public in a most powerful way the importance of the working man. The result was that from midnight last night until this hour of writing, two P.M., London has been almost wholly deprived of artificial light, of the means of communication with any other portions of the empire or the continent, and of all internal vehicular locomotion.

It is but just to the working men to say that, notwithstanding their awful responsibility in producing such a terrible situation, they have in no way added to the confusion arising from their criminal rashness. But no sooner did the state of things become generally known last night, than Rapine awoke and shook itself, and stalked forth into the dark deserted ways, and did such deeds as will make the readers of later generations shudder. Howls and shrieks and yells and cursings and piteous prayers broke the quiet hours. Men and women thought that the Day of Judgment was at hand, and the wrath of Heaven had been let loose; then they fell upon their knees in prayer. Later on, discovering it was only the vices of man that had been unshackled, they abandoned their prayers, arose from their knees, and gave up all thought of finding mercy, and surrendered themselves to despair.

Elsewhere we give a catalogue of some of the awful deeds hidden beneath the darkness of last night and revealed by the light of to-day. For a considerable time to come we must expect additional disclosures; but many of the deeds, many of the foulest and most undreamable, will never be made public. They have been swallowed up in the Maelström of that night's saturnalia of crime.

It was, we understand, the intention of the men who struck to hold out for a week, but already they stand appalled and humbled under the shadow of their awful deed. We have it upon excellent authority that at four o'clock this afternoon all the men will once more return to work and relieve the city from its enforced separation from the rest of civilisation, and deliver it from the tyranny of the prodigious monster made absolute king of London when the Light went out.

In a later edition the 'Standard' published this, under date 5 P.M.—

All the men have returned to work. The wires are once more busy. The siege of London from within is at an end. The blockade is raised. No such *Te Deum* ever arose to Heaven as will ascend from this city to-night when it kneels to pray in the white-curtained nurseries of its unpolluted homes.

'Who is that?'

'It is I, Michael.'

'Is that Jane Ilford?'

'Yes. I am come to take you home, Michael. The doctor

says you are strong enough to go now, and I have a cab waiting for you.'

'How are Helen, and—our daughter?'

'Well. They are both going on nicely. Helen was sitting up as I came for you.'

'Take my hand and lead me. You know you must lead me now.'

She takes her brother-in-law by the hand, draws his arm within hers, leads him down the long passage between the beds, down the stairs, and out through the hall to the open air. A cab stands waiting for them at the hospital door. It is the afternoon of Saturday the tenth of November.

They drive quietly through the busy streets to Shakespeare Road. Although he is discharged from the hospital, he is still very feeble. The injuries he received on the bridge, the terrible shock sustained by him when he was flung over, and his long immersion before he was picked up by the passing coal-barge, all have shattered and weakened him. He wears no spectacles now.

At last they arrive, and he is led by his sister-in-law into the room where his wife lies. She is propped up to receive him. Across her lap rests their child, a week old.

The wife puts her arms round the husband's neck and kisses him, and smiles, and says after a little pause, 'Won't you kiss our daughter?'

He raises himself and says, 'Place her in my arms.'

'Take her.' The mother lifts up the infant.

'Place her in my arms, Helen. Men ill-used me on the bridge that night, and now this one has gone too'—he touches his left eye with his hand.

'She was born, sir, in the middle of the Great Dark,' says the nurse, laying the sleeping infant across the blind father's arms.

He stoops and kisses the child, then hands the child back to the mother, saying sadly, 'She was born in the middle of the Great Dark that I made thinking brighter light would come out of that darkness for those I loved. She was born upon the beginning of this Great Dark that was made for me when the lights were out. Almighty Maker of the darkness and the light forgive me, and let me have light to see her and all of these—in the Hereafter!'

RICHARD DOWLING.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER X.

SARAH.

SARAH'S was a strange nature—a compound of fierceness and devotion. She would have laid down her life for any one she loved, and her cousin was one of them; yet at this moment she seemed to hate her. Underneath her quiet and reserved manner there were hidden fires. Often she displayed a morbid desire to hide herself from everybody. Polly called this ‘sulking,’ and would advise her to take a walk. Sarah would make no reply, but proceeded with her household duties, dumb and pale, as if she could not understand such lightness of heart.

Polly would take up her hat and go out to see to the progress of the farm work. She was rather surprised, therefore, when, one morning she had occasion to give this advice, Sarah answered:—

‘Yes, I will.’

‘That’s right, for since we were at Walton you have been as gloomy as if you had something on your mind that troubled your conscience.’

‘I *have* something on my mind.’

‘What is it?’

‘That you and I are likely to quarrel.’

Polly laughed merrily.

‘Why, we’ve often done that, and no doubt we shall do it again. People couldn’t live without quarrelling, life would be so monotonous.’

Sarah, holding down her head, as if looking for a pin in the waist of her gown:—

‘You always take things lightly—is it because you are indifferent?’

‘I dare say it is,’ was the careless response.

‘Even to Michael?’

‘Certainly,’ said Polly; and there was a note of surprise in her tone, which clearly meant—‘Why is she always referring to Michael?’ She continued: ‘If I am indifferent to everything, Michael must be included.’

Sarah turned away, with a half-suppressed sigh.

‘What’s that for?’ cried Polly. ‘Are you sorry that I am not ready to be his wife?’

‘Yes.’

There was something pathetic in the way the word was spoken. She did not turn—the head was still bowed, and she walked slowly out.

‘Sulking again,’ thought Polly, being still without the slightest clue to the solution of the puzzle which her cousin’s conduct presented.

Sarah went through the meadow, avoiding the haymakers, down to the river, and turned along the road towards the old grey parish church. The slanting roof of the church was patched with moss, and the red tiles were shaded with the green mould of ages. The front wall and the porch were covered with ivy, but there were sad dilapidations visible in other parts of the building. Every year there was a talk of repairs, but as yet they had not been made, although the committee had gone so far as to ask an estimate for the work from Sir Gilbert Scott.

Just beyond the church was the ford, and stretching across it was a high wooden footbridge, with a rather shaky railing on one side. The bridge was made high, because in winter the river was often flooded, and, overflowing, turned the surrounding meadows into lakes.

Sarah ascended the bridge, and, halting in the middle, rested her elbow on the railing. She looked down into the clear stream and its bright yellow bed, with its many moss-covered stones jutting up like miniature islands.

There was no dreaminess in her gaze; the expression was rather hard and resolute than that of one who admired the scenery.

But she ought to have admired it. On one side stood the picturesque church; on the other, a quaint little thatched inn almost as old as the church itself, and once the only place where weary wayfarers could find rest in that district; but now, fallen from all its greatness, become the haunt of carriers, pedlars, and those pedestrians whose pockets demanded cheapness rather than elegance. Up the river were rows of willows drooping over, and casting broad shadows upon it; beyond them a friendly crowd of elms, silver beeches, and ancient oaks, whilst a long row of poplars stood like giant sentinels, guarding all. Surrounding these were green pastures and fields of ripening grain. In the distance a gentle rise fringed with trees which touched the horizon and formed an admirable background to the scene.

Sarah saw nothing of all this, and she appeared to have had n



particular object in her stroll. Presently, however, her eyes brightened, and then became suddenly sad.

A man was coming along the road who must cross the bridge. Her hand grasped the rail tightly.

It was difficult for two people to pass each other on the narrow footbridge; and so, when the man approached, he stopped to see which way the lady intended to move. She looked up, and he, holding out his hand, exclaimed:—

‘What, Sarah! How do you happen to be here? Are you going a-fishing?’

She did not appear to observe his question; but answered, in a low, constrained voice, her head bowed again:—

‘No, Mr. Walton. I knew you were going to Elizabeth House to-day at twelve, and that you would come this way, and I came to meet you.’

‘That’s a compliment—thank you. But why, in the name of wonder, should you come here to meet me, when you knew I would not be long absent from the Meadow?’

‘To give you this.’

She handed him a large envelope, which was evidently well filled with papers.

‘A secret from Polly?’

‘Yes,’ was the answer, spoken very low.

He looked at the envelope, which bore the droll inscription, written in a large square hand:—

TO MY DAUGHTER SARAH.—To cancel, if she marries him; otherwise, to recover, if she can.

ROBERT HODSOLL.

But the words from ‘if she marries him’ were scored out. Walton, however, was curious, and contrived to decipher them. He was about to break the big red seal, when Sarah stopped him.

‘You need not open it now; but I thought that if anything happened to me the papers would be safest in your hands.’

He had always thought Sarah eccentric, now he began to think her a little crazed.

‘Why, do you think of anything happening to you?’

‘Something might.’

He laughed at the gravity with which this was spoken.

‘You have no thought of suicide, I hope, and you are not likely to die soon.’

‘Who knows?’ she said carelessly.

‘But why do you give me this?’

‘It will interest you more than any one else.’

‘Very well ; when something happens to you I will open it.’

‘Thank you.’ And she was moving away.

‘Why, you haven’t shaken hands, Sarah !’

She held out her hand ; and as he took it :—

‘Oh, by the way, I forgot to ask how Pol——Miss Holt is.’

‘Very well,’ was the sharp answer. And the hand was withdrawn.

‘Then, would you mind telling her that I’ll bring Jim over to-morrow or next day, to show her what he can do in trotting in harness ?’

‘Yes.’ And the harshness of her tone this time attracted his attention.

‘What have I done to vex you, Sarah ?’

‘Nothing.’

‘There must be something.’

‘Then you should know.’

‘Upon my honour, I don’t.’

‘Honour !’

The exclamation and the flash of her angry dark eyes on his face told him that no fun was intended. He did not relish either the exclamation or the look that accompanied it. So :—

‘Then, simply, I don’t, if the other form does not please you.’

‘Think, then, and perhaps you will remember. But you will be late for your appointment.’

She bowed stiffly, and this time she did go, retracing her steps by the old church and the riverside path.

He would have been amused, only there was something of such subdued fierceness in her manner that he stood for a moment in blank astonishment.

‘She is a rum girl—a tragedy queen, by Jove !’

And he put the packet in his pocket and continued his way to Elizabeth House, whither he was going to see two horses which Sir Montague Lewis had recently purchased. There, inspecting the horses, he forgot all about Sarah.

She walked rapidly now, and her face was whiter than ever, her lips tightly closed. She quickened her pace until it became almost a run. It seemed as if she were running away from something.

And she was running away—from her own thoughts. He did not know the bitterness that was in her heart, and he would not have cared if he had known. She had expected, rather hoped for, some kind word from him, some sign that he recollected the past. He had not spoken one word that she considered kind, and he showed no remembrance of what had gone before. The rushing

sound of the river was like a cry of despair in her ears; the gentle flutter of the leaves was full of melancholy, and even the birds sang sad songs to her.

She encountered Zachy—staff in hand, short black pipe in mouth as usual—returning from one of his rounds at his hop-and-step pace.

‘Good-day, miss,’ he said, touching his cap.

But she passed as if she did not see him.

The old man took the pipe from his mouth and stared after her.

‘Darned if that aint queer—she’s a-runnin’ like a wild ‘un, and never gave a look at me! She used to be mortal kind, too. Ah! what wimen is!’

He spoke as a man of experience. He was hurt by Sarah passing him without recognition, for he was accustomed to a salute from everybody in the parish, and a nod even from Sir Montague. He put his pipe in his mouth again, and trudged along meditating on the inconsistencies of womankind.

She reached the house, flushed and breathless.

Polly met her at the door.

‘You’re late, Sarah, but I waited dinner.’

‘You shouldn’t have done that, for I can’t take any,’ she gasped.

‘Why, you are quite out of breath! What have you been walking so fast for?’

‘To walk the devil out of me,’ was the strange answer, as she passed and went upstairs.

CHAPTER XI.

MISS WALTON MAKES A FRIENDLY CALL.

So Polly was left to take dinner alone, and she went into the parlour pitying Sarah for her loss of appetite.

‘If love is like that,’ she thought, as she helped herself to a good slice of roast-beef, ‘goodness keep me out of it. I like to have my dinner.’

But in spite of this very natural feeling, she ate slowly and thoughtfully. It was not comfortable to dine alone, and sit brooding over all the ills of life, with the certainty of spoiling the digestion.

Sarah’s conduct was becoming stranger than ever. (Mustard.) What could be the meaning of it? (Salt.) And why would she not frankly tell what was the matter to one from whom she knew that she was sure of sympathy and help, if help could be given?

(She began to eat.) There was something queer in it all, but there was no use bothering one's head about it.

Thus Polly mused and ate, her eyes fixed upon her plate, and her ears insensible to sounds, until there came a tremendous rat—tat-tat at the door, the knock being repeated immediately, as if the visitor were impatient at a moment's delay in obtaining admission.

Polly looked up in amazement, and, glancing through the window, saw the Waltons' carriage at the gate—the carriage which had created such scandal throughout the district and such sneering remarks about beggars on horseback.

Presently the highly enamelled card of 'Miss Walton, of Walton Abbey,' was handed to her.

'Shall I take her upstairs, miss?'

'No, just tell her to come in here.'

Miss Walton entered, her silk dress—grey, with jacket to match—rustling pompously. She wore a hat, the trimmings of which combined all the colours of the rainbow. It might have suited a girl of sixteen, but certainly not a lady over thirty.

She sniffed the air, and felt indignant at being introduced to a room where there was such a smell of roast-beef and cabbage. It seemed like a deliberate insult.

Polly rose and advanced to shake hands.

'Miss Walton, this is an unexpected——'

'Visit,' she was going to say, but making a pause, Miss Walton completed the sentence:—

'Pleasure? Oh, don't mention it, I beg.'

'I didn't,' said Polly, quietly handing her a chair.

Miss Walton's eyes looked daggers, and she meant to use them.

'Vulgar creature!' was her mental exclamation. 'And Tom can think of such a person as this!'

'I am just taking dinner—lunch, I suppose you would call it. Will you take a little with me?'

'No, thanks; I shall be home in time for lunch. You see we are late people.' (Smiling sweetly, as if to indicate that the upper classes were always late people.)

'That's fashionable, isn't it?' said Polly, continuing her meal unconcernedly.

'Yes, dear.' (Smiling again, so graciously!) 'I suppose you do not know much about the ways of fashionable society?'

'Nothing at all, except that those who ape them are fools.' And she carelessly put away one plate, took another, and helped herself to cheese.

Miss Walton felt the sting, but she would not apply the remark to herself.

‘You are really *too* severe, dear, upon those unfortunate people who mistake their position. We always pity them; but, you know, vanity is a dreadful thing.’

And she gave a little laugh, as if she were quite out of the category of those preposterous people whose weakness she was good enough to pity.

Polly helped herself to bread, and said nothing; she knew that if she did speak it would be to say something still more rude than anything she had yet uttered. So she discreetly held her tongue, wondering all the time what the object of this visit might be. The ‘dear’ (how she hated it!) was too friendly not to mean that there was something wanted from her.

Miss Walton’s silks rustled again, and she said, with an assumed air of familiarity, as if they were on the most friendly terms now:

‘I thought that, as you had forgotten to call——’

‘I never thought of it,’ interrupted Polly.

‘Ah, well, dear, it is usual, you know. I thought I would drive over and see how you were after our little gathering.’

‘I’m all right. I always am.’

It seemed as if Polly were trying to be coarse and abrupt in her expressions.

‘Indeed! What a blessing to be always in good health! I don’t see how you people could get on without it.’

‘I don’t see how *you* people could get on without it either.’

Miss Walton laughed so prettily!

‘Why, you are so very quick this morning, Miss Holt! That is just like the way my brother catches us up—have you seen him lately?’

She took out her scent-bottle and placed it to her nose with a well-practised turn of the hand, which displayed her rings to the best advantage—she had taken off her glove for the purpose.

Polly’s eyes twinkled with malicious fun. She understood it all now. She had finished dinner, and turned her chair round so that she faced her visitor.

‘Oh, yes,’ she answered carelessly, ‘I saw him lately; he comes often. He is a capital judge of horses, but he knows nothing about cows or pigs—we do a large trade in pigs, hereabouts. I suppose you don’t know anything about them either?’

Miss Walton’s thought was, ‘Good heavens! does she expect my brother to become a pig-dealer?’ Her answer was:—

‘No, dear; you see, our family does not exactly go in for farm work. We leave that to our bailiff.’

‘It’s a pity; you might make a great deal out of Walton if you were to work it yourselves—that’s what I would do if I were there.’

In spite of her scent-bottle Miss Walton turned pale—then Polly *was* thinking of being there!

‘Quite true, dear; but people of education have so many other more refined occupations.’

‘Yes,’ said Polly; and she very nearly added, ‘when they can afford it.’

There was a pause. Polly sat quiet, making no attempt to continue the conversation, and enjoying the awkwardness of her visitor, who, she knew, had not yet come to the point she was aiming at. Miss Walton at length made an effort:—

‘My brother always speaks with admiration of the excellent way in which you manage the Meadow.’

‘That is very kind of him—but he always is so kind and so obliging!’

She was goading Miss Walton into frenzy. Still that lady preserved her self-control.

‘I suppose you are very friendly with him, dear?’

Polly opened her eyes wide, and her pretty lips contracted in mild astonishment.

‘Why, of course, or he would not be here so often.’

‘No, dear. Will you pardon me?—the matter is of so much importance to us—will you pardon a very, very rude question?’

‘As many as you like.’

‘Well, I wanted to ask—I *do* hope you will not be offended—I know it is rude; but I wanted to ask—has he proposed?’

She got the question out with a gasp of fear as to the answer.

‘Oh, yes, several times,’ said Polly, laying one hand on her knee and calmly smoothing it from the wrist downward with the other.

Miss Walton used her scent-bottle this time without any heed to the display of her rings.

‘And pardon another rude question have you accepted him?’

‘Oh, no; I have not been able to make up my mind yet.’

‘Well, my dear Miss Holt, as your sincere friend—as your very sincere friend, I would like to warn you that marriages between—between people in different ranks of life never turn out happily—never!’

‘I was thinking of that myself,’ said Polly meekly, with eyes demurely cast down at the hand she was still smoothing. ‘There was poor Annie Roulston, a farmer’s daughter like myself, and she

married the chandler's son in the village, and the poor thing just pined away and died—all because she had got into a family in a rank of life so different from her own.'

Miss Walton was conscious that her cheeks were tingling, for her grandfather, the great Alderman Smith, had been a chandler. And yet the wicked creature sat there so meekly, and raised her clear blue eyes, so full of pity, as if seeking sympathy for poor Annie Roulston, that she could say nothing.

'Well, dear, that is a sad story, and it should be a warning to you. It is as your friend I speak. You never could be happy at Walton—I am sure of that—and I want you to promise me one thing.'

'What is that, Miss Walton?'

'To send my brother away next time he calls.'

'Oh, I cannot promise to do that—it would be so rude.'

And she rose to her feet, plainly dismissing the sister, if she would not dismiss the brother. Miss Walton understood, and rose also.

'It is for his sake as well as your own that I advise you to do this,' she said, a little sharply; for her temper, which she had controlled wonderfully—for her—was giving way at last.

'It is very kind of you, indeed, to take so much trouble on my account.' (This as she opened the door.)

'Our Family would never agree to such a match.'

'I am so sorry to have offended your family.'

Miss Walton rustled down the path with a bitter consciousness that that chit of a girl had been making fun of her all the time.

Polly followed meekly, opened the gate for her, and would even have opened the carriage-door, but the man was there. As the carriage moved Miss Walton called from the window:—

'Now, do not forget, Miss Holt—our Family will never agree to it.'

Polly nodded quite sadly, and then, as the carriage drove away, her merry laugh told that she had enjoyed her entertainment.

But, notwithstanding the amusement she had found in puzzling Miss Walton, the smile left her face gradually as she slowly approached the house, hands clasped behind her as usual. She did not like the visit or the purpose of it. There was too much taken for granted. Walton must have said something to his sisters to lead them to believe that she favoured him. Did she favour him? No. And yet she half-wished she could have married him, just to spite the sisters.

That was one of her wicked thoughts, and she smiled at the absurdity of it. People are often driven into marriage to

oblige friends who keep on persistently coupling their names. Polly felt as if she were very much in that position. Only *she* would not be driven; she would take her own way and please herself, no matter what people chose to say. Still, it was irritating.

She saw Sarah coming down the stairs, very pale and very quiet now. Her eyes were traitors, and betrayed the fact that she had been crying. Polly looked at her with an expression of affectionate curiosity.

‘I beg your pardon, Polly,’ said Sarah, with trembling lips and eyes cast down, ‘for being in such an ill-humour this morning; but I could not help myself.’

‘Don’t speak that way, Sarah, or you’ll make me as bad as yourself.’

And she put her arm round her.

‘Oh, don’t, don’t, don’t!’ cried Sarah, shrinking back and covering her face with her hands.

‘What can it be? Are you ill? Has anybody vexed you? Tell me.’

Sarah instantly uncovered her face and was quiet again.

‘It is nothing; don’t mind me just now.’

‘You will tell me by and by, then?’

‘No, I hope you will never know it.’ Then hastily, to prevent Polly replying: ‘I forgot to tell you that I met Mr. Walton this morning, and he asked me to say that he will be over with Jim to-morrow.’

Walton again! If Polly had been a man, she would have prefixed his name with a very forcible epithet. Being a woman, she only wished him far enough. The man and his name seemed to haunt her.

In the vexation she felt, she did not observe the eager, hungry way in which Sarah watched her face as she pronounced the name.

CHAPTER XII.

A HAPPY FAMILY.

ALICE and Carry were awed into silence, and Mrs. Walton was almost thrown into hysterics, when they saw the grim face of Miss Walton on her return from the Meadow. They all knew that she had been going thence—‘to settle affairs,’ she had said; and they knew that if anybody could settle affairs, she would do it.

Miss Walton sat down, or rather dropped down, as if utterly exhausted by her morning’s work. One sister ran to take off her bonnet, the other ran to her with a glass of water, and she

accepted these services with the calm air of a monarch whose menials are only doing their duty. There was a good deal of affectation in her exhaustion, as there was in everything she did—except scolding the servants. In that she was honest enough. She revived a little after the water, and the two sisters instantly burst out in chorus:—

‘Is it true? What has happened? Have you settled it?’

‘I cannot answer so many questions at once,’ said Miss Walton, with dignity. ‘It is true—he has proposed!’

‘Oh, Lizzie, that can’t be—it is too awful!’ said Alice.

‘Goodness gracious!’ was all Carry said; but even she began to give up hopes of Tom.

‘Oh, dear!’ exclaimed Mrs. Walton, who was sitting on the couch fanning herself, and so red in the face that a fit of apoplexy seemed imminent; ‘if my poor dear father, Alderman Smith, had only known *this*!’

‘And I am sure she has accepted him,’ continued Miss Walton, ‘although the impertinent hussy pretended that she had not yet made up her mind—as if, indeed, she would refuse the opportunity to become mistress of Walton Abbey!’

Mrs. Walton groaned.

‘And am I to be turned out of my house in my old age?’

‘But haven’t you settled it?’ cried the girls, with evident faith in their sister’s power.

‘I told her my mind very plainly, and I think I gave her a fright, for she was humble enough before I left. But the sly minx would give me no promise.’

Then, with every possible exaggeration of her own prowess and mastery over the Enemy, every point telling in her favour, she recounted what nobody would have recognised as the conversation at the Meadow. When she had finished she arranged her skirts with much self-satisfaction and waited for applause.

The only applause she got was a general cry:—

‘But what are we to do?’

Miss Walton, not being ready with any plan at the moment, looked as if she were, and said very sagely:—

‘Wait till Tom comes home.’

Then she went up to change her dress before luncheon was served, leaving her sisters and mother in utter consternation at the thought of the calamity which threatened them. Poor Mrs. Walton had been so filled with exaggerated ideas of the evils that would happen if Tom married, that she moaned:—

‘Oh, my dears, we’ll all have to go into the workhouse.’

The girls cried and did their best to comfort her, without

much effect until luncheon was served, and then she began to think that she might yet be saved from the miserable fate she had contemplated a little while ago.

They waited anxiously for the return of the big brother whose conduct was so reprehensible.

But Tom was late. After examining the horses, and having a scamper on one of them to test its qualities, he spent the afternoon playing billiards with Sir Montague, who still prided himself on the youthfulness of his spirit (his liver did interfere sometimes) and upon his capacity for entering into all the sports and revelries of men much younger than himself. He was not an old man in years—only fifty, but twenty of them spent in India made him appear much more. He would have spent a lonely life in his big house had it not been for his horses and the young fellows he gathered around him, who enjoyed themselves and humoured his whims.

He had taken a liking for Tom because in him he saw the reflection of what he had been himself in the days of that youth the loss of which he was always lamenting in secret. Tom was fond of horses, always in debt, always in love, and involved in one scrape or another. He was a man after the baronet's own heart.

So Tom was often at Elizabeth House, and rarely got home till midnight or after. Then the house was always dark, and everybody in bed. A candle and matches lay on the hall table ready for him. Sometimes he had to strike a number of matches before he succeeded in lighting the candle, and at each failure he muttered to himself. Then he would go upstairs as quietly as he could.

But as he approached the house on this night, as late as usual, he was surprised to see there was still light in the drawing-room and in the hall.

'Halloa! have they got a spree on, and never told me?'

He went in quite jauntily, thinking he would catch the 'sistern' at their high jinks. But there was a dead silence in the house: that was not very like high jinks. He listened for a moment, and then, very much puzzled, went into the drawing-room. He paused on the threshold.

His mother lay on the couch asleep; the large lamp, with its Parian shade, stood in the centre of the table at full blaze. Carry was seated on a low chair, her face towards him, and so deeply interested in 'A Princess of Thule' that she did not hear him enter. Alice was tatting, and Miss Walton sat bolt upright in a stiff-backed chair, with hands folded on her lap and her keen eyes *glaring at him*.

He suddenly gave a loud laugh at what he considered a ludicrous scene, and his mother started up, trembling.

‘Lord bless us! what’s that?’ she cried, scarcely realising for the moment where she was.

‘It’s only me, mother. What are you all doing out of bed at this hour? Have you had robbers in the house, or are you expecting them?’

‘Are you sober?’ asked the eldest sister, severely.

‘I don’t know; but did you ever know a man say he wasn’t?’

She passed the question as if she had not heard it.

‘If you are so, let me tell you that there is a robber in the house—one who would rob his mother and sisters of their home and turn them adrift in the wide world, unprovided for and unprotected.’

‘What a blackguard!’ said Tom, taking a chair beside his mother, who was beginning to cry.

‘That blackguard, as you call him, is yourself, Thomas Walton.’

‘Oh, Lizzie, don’t—don’t go on like that,’ sobbed the mother.

‘Don’t mind her, mother; it’s only the Angel on her high horse, and she’s very amusing when she mounts.’ Then, turning to Alice and Carry, who were nervously hanging down their heads: ‘Has she been practising this part long, and what play did she find it in? . . . Go on, Lizzie, it’s very well done.’

Miss Walton could keep her ground firmly enough with most people, but she could not stand Tom’s ‘chaff’ for any length of time.

‘You are as aggravating as you are heartless,’ she said.

‘I’m certain that’s not in the part.’

There was silence. Miss Walton felt her dignity ebbing fast, and she made a violent effort to retain it.

‘That is not the way to talk of a matter which is of so much importance to your mother and to us.’

‘We’ll all have to go to the workhouse,’ sobbed Mrs. Walton.

‘And very comfortable quarters you’ll find there. I saw the beggars eating their Christmas dinner once, and it wasn’t at all a bad dinner. But come, now, Lizzie, get off your horse for a little while—say five minutes—and tell us plainly what you are driving at.’

‘Why did you propose to that—that person at the Meadow farm?’

‘Whew!’ whistled Tom, ‘that’s it. Why? Because I like her.’

‘And you mean to marry her?’

‘If I can get her.’

‘And you say that to our faces!’

‘Would you have me say it to your backs?’

‘Can you not be serious for one moment?’ exclaimed his now angry sister. ‘You know that your income—*our* income, I ought to say—is not sufficient for you to support a wife and family and us too. What is to become of your mother? What is to become of us?’

‘I didn’t think of that,’ said Tom, reflecting now; and suddenly, as if a bright idea had occurred to him, ‘I’ll tell you: I’ll take care of mother, and you can get married too. I won’t scold you for it.’

It seemed impossible to get him to view the matter in the serious light in which they saw it, and the Angel was sorely hurt by that last sally.

‘Oh, Tom, how can you?’ exclaimed Carry, reproachfully, throwing her arms round his neck, and beginning to sob like her mother.

This was too much for Tom; and although she was his favourite, he put her away from him impatiently.

‘This is all nonsense. You talk as if the affair was settled. It isn’t settled; and maybe, in the end, you’ll have your wish and I won’t have mine.’

‘I hope so,’ said Miss Walton sharply, ‘for she is not a fit person to bring into Our Family.’

‘If you had her face and fortune you would think yourself qualified to enter any family. There, now, let us stop this squabbling. I am tired, and want to go to bed. Good night, mother; good night, girls.’

He left the room; and there sat the lady who could ‘settle everything,’ discomfited, but not beaten yet.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRAMPS.

MICHAEL was a slow wooer, but he was an observant one, and ready to take advantage of any opportunity that presented itself. He preferred to wait for the opportunity, however, rather than to make it, for he knew the temper of his mistress, and that the more she was driven in one direction the more determined she would be to go in another. He noted that lately, notwithstanding her declaration of independence, she began again to ask his counsel about various matters on the farm. Besides, as a triumph of his skill,

the cow, which she had declared must die, had recovered, and promised to be one of the most valuable in her possession.

So, when in the evening he received a message that he was wanted immediately at the Meadow, he was not much surprised, and he was greatly delighted. Something the matter with the cattle again; but he was none the less quick in his steps on that account. When he entered the little gate he saw Polly walking up and down the path, and two of the labourers standing by the porch, each with a pitchfork in his hand. When he approached he saw that she was in a passion.

‘I’m glad you’ve come so quickly, Michael,’ she began, without allowing him time to speak. ‘There are two gipsy tinkers in the barn, and they are smoking amongst the straw. I asked them to stop smoking or to leave the place. I suppose they know there are only women in the house, and they just laughed at me.’

‘And the mistress won’t let us pitchfork ’em out, sir.’

‘No, no, there must be no fighting—if you can help it. When they see you, Michael, they will know we are not unprotected, and they will go away quietly. Give them this half-crown; it will get lodgings for them somewhere in the village and prevent them coming back.’

‘It will more likely enable them to get drunk, and they will come back worse than ever.’

But Polly insisted that this was the easiest way of disposing of the dangerous lodgers; so Michael had nothing for it but to submit.

‘If they are civil I’ll give it to them; if not, we’ll clear them out without a bribe.’

He proceeded to the barn, Polly accompanying him, Carter and his son—the latter a stalwart youth of eighteen—following with their pitchforks. The barn communicated with the cow-house, and the cow-house with the stables, so that if the first—which was filled with dry straw—had taken fire the whole range of buildings would have been destroyed. This was a serious matter to Polly, and more than enough to account for her anxiety. She had often given shelter to tramps, but it was when they came to ask for it, and on condition that there should be no smoking inside the barn. The condition was, so far as she knew, generally observed. At any rate, there had been no accident hitherto. But the fellows inside now had taken possession without leave, and were striking matches and dropping sparks from their pipes, putting the place in imminent danger.

It was eight o’clock, but still daylight. Michael threw open one wing of the huge black door of the barn. He saw two of the

ugliest-looking rascals he had ever come across comfortably settled amongst the straw, and their pipes blazing. Faces black with dirt, ragged hair which seemed never to have been combed; neckerchiefs which had once been red; the one wore a brown coat, the other a grey coat, ragged and greasy; both had brown corduroy breeches. One had a waistcoat made of some animal's skin, bare and scabbed in many places; the other had no waistcoat, and his blue-striped shirt was open at the breast, displaying more uncleanness.

When they saw it was a man who opened the door they made a hurried attempt to hide their pipes beneath the straw; but Michael observed what they were doing.

'Come, clear out,' he said, entering the barn.

'You can't refuse us one night's lodging, guv'nor; we don't ask for nothing more, and we'll do up all your pots free in the mornin'.'

'We can't risk letting you stay here after what we have seen. So clear out at once, and the more quietly you go the better it will be for you.'

The man got up, grumbling, fastened some old pots and kettles together with a strap, slung them over his shoulder, and went out. But the one with the scabbed waistcoat impudently stuck his pipe in his mouth again, folded his arms, and called to his comrade:—

'Wot are you a-doin' of, 'Arry? I aint a-goin' to shift my lodgin' this bloomin' night.'

'We'll see about that,' said Michael, standing over him. 'I'll give you two minutes to get out.'

'Look 'ere, guv'nor: we've tramped from London and only got one bloomin' job all the way, and I aint goin' to walk no more afore I 'as a snooze.'

Michael seized him under the armpits and swung him through the doorway. He fell forward on his knees, his pipe smashing on the ground, and the burning tobacco, fanned by the breeze, sent up a cloud of smoke to his eyes. He was on his feet in a minute and turned upon Michael, who was close behind; but the Carter seized him, one by each arm, and held him fast in spite of his furious kicks and struggles.

'If you don't be quiet I'll tie you up until we get the constables.'

He was a fine specimen of the London rough; and finding himself mastered, he swore savagely.

Michael turned to Polly, who was standing by, rather pale but quite calm.

'Hadn't you better go inside, Polly?'

'I would rather stay till you get them off. Give them the money.'

'Can't you knock him down, mate?' shouted the prisoner, with an oath.

His mate would have been very glad to knock him down; but on looking at Michael he thought it wiser not to try.

'No use making a row, Dick,' he said, sulkily; 'better come on quiet. I knows of lots o' places where we can roost.'

'Where can I find a rope, Carter? We can fasten this fellow till we get the constable.'

'Just inside the barn, sir, on the left-hand side.'

It was the second time the constable had been mentioned, and Dick was cool enough now to catch the sound. He had very good reasons of his own for not desiring to get into the hands of the police even on so trivial a charge as that of trespass. So, as Michael approached with the rope, he said:—

'Look 'ere, guv'nor: just tell them coves to let go, and we'll move off quiet.'

He was released, and, after giving himself a shake, he added coolly, 'I heerd the young lady sayin' as you was to tip us summut give us a bob to keep us from starvin'.'

'Not a penny. Had you gone quietly at first you would have got something, but not now.'

'You won't? All right, we'll square it some other time. Come on, Bet.'

The latter words were given in a shout, and to the surprise of Polly and Michael there walked out from the back of the barn a woman, broad, stout, and ruddy. She had thriven well on somebody's chickens. She wore an old straw bonnet with faded blue ribbons, a red shawl, and a coloured cotton gown, with very much draggled tails. She had white teeth which might have come the other day from the hands of the dentist, and she showed them as she passed close to Polly.

'You will live to be turned out of a barn, as I am now,' she said, viciously, and followed the men.

Polly was not in the least superstitious, but the unexpected appearance of the woman, and the still more unexpected address, gave her 'quite a turn,' as she afterwards confessed.

When the three tramps reached the gate which opened to the road they turned, like the Witches in 'Macbeth,' stared at their ejectors, and then coolly surveyed the house, as if seeking its weakest part. Dick nodded familiarly, and with his companion walked in the direction of the village.

‘We are not done with that chap yet,’ said Michael; ‘he means to have it out with us somehow.’

‘I think so too,’ said Polly, a little nervous, which was such a rare symptom for her to display that he observed it. ‘I think you might stay here to-night, Michael, if you can.’

‘I was thinking of that myself. Carter and I can take up our quarters in the parlour.’

‘Yes, that would do; you can get the sofa, and we can arrange some chairs for Carter. Now we might go round and see that the henhouse is locked. Susan often forgets it.’

Michael gave Toby a message to his father, saw that all the doors were locked, and took the keys with him. Carter went to tell his wife that he was to remain at the house that night. Polly and Michael proceeded to inspect the henhouse.

Twilight had come upon them, and there was just a faint glow in the west to show where the sun had dropped from sight. There was a calm in the atmosphere befitting the hour of rest from the toil of day. The occasional melancholy ‘moo-oo’ of a solitary cow, the twitter of birds settling for the night, or the cackle-cackle of a hen disturbed in its rest by a rat or a neighbour, were the only sounds. Under the apple trees there were absolutely black shadows; in the open spaces, a tender soothing light.

By instinct submitting to some influence of the calm atmosphere, the two walked slowly; she holding up her skirt behind to avoid the dew, he swinging the big keys in his hand. She was thinking of her hens and ducks, and perhaps something more, but that something more was very vague even to herself; he was wondering if she had any sense of the joy which he was experiencing. His soul had ‘its content so absolute’ that he wished the tramps would come every evening, if afterwards he might walk with her thus. He felt as if within the last half-hour they had been drawn nearer to each other than they had ever been before.

‘I wish we could go on this way for ever, Polly,’ he said suddenly.

‘We would get our deaths of cold in an hour,’ was the unsentimental reply.

They were standing by the duck-pond, and their figures appeared in silhouette on the shallow water. She pretended to be trying to see if any of the ducks were still out, but she took an occasional side-glance at his face. The expression was thoughtful: he was trying to work out a problem—would this girl ever marry? Presently he took her hand, and she allowed him, now gazing straight in his face.

‘Polly, I am waiting,’ he said very quietly.

‘For what?’

‘For you, and you know it.’

She put her disengaged hand gently on his arm—pityingly, he thought.

‘Don’t press me about that just now; for it is the one matter on which I cannot make up my mind. Sometimes ‘Yes’ is on my lips, and the next minute it is off again. I am afraid of myself. Now let us see if the henhouse is locked.’

It was the first time she had spoken seriously to him, and that was a gain; but he felt that it was Walton who had rendered it so difficult for her to make up her mind.

They found the henhouse—which stood at the other end of the pond and in the corner of the orchard nearest to the house—properly locked. They went in and had supper. Sarah served it, and seemed to be in a hurry to get it over. As soon as the table had been cleared she went to bed, and Polly soon followed her. Then Michael placed matches beside the candlestick, and saw that Carter, with a huge cudgel beside him, had settled down on the chairs; next, he put out the light and lay down on the sofa.

But all these precautions were to no purpose. Dick and his companions knew their business, and were not likely to attempt to break into the house that night, when they knew it would be guarded. Carter was soon snoring, and about two o’clock in the morning Michael also fell asleep. They were not disturbed.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERY ANNOYING.

MICHAEL after breakfast returned to Marshstead. He found his father out in the field walking, and with a staff in his hand, having a blade for the purpose, digging up thistles as he passed along.

‘Well, did you catch the rascals?’

‘No, dad, they did not come near us during the night.’

‘That’s a pity. I’d have liked them to get a good thrashing and then locked up. The villains, to come into a decent man’s barn and set fire to it! I’d have choked ’em—ah!’

And he dug up a thistle with as much vehemence as if it had been one of the rascals and he had got him by the throat.

‘But they didn’t set fire to it, dad; we were only afraid they might.’

‘Same thing, same thing. Arranged with Polly yet?’

‘Arranged what, dad?’

‘Why, the day of the marriage, of course.’

‘We have not got so far as to arrange that the marriage is to take place at all yet,’ said Michael, smiling at his father’s impatience.

‘You are a backward lad. I’ve been considering it all yesterday and many’s the time afore. Polly’s not a wench to lie long on the stocks, and if you don’t get the business done out of hand you’ll have plenty after her, and you’ll lose her.’

‘There are plenty after her now.’

‘Who—who? Tell me that. I knew you were slow, but didn’t think you would lose her. Who is it, who is it?’

‘Well, Walton, for one.’

The old man looked up sharply, and his shrivelled cheeks seemed to quiver.

‘What, young Walton? She shan’t marry him. Tell them to get the gig ready.’

Michael was rather anxious in regard to what his father might be intending to do, but he knew that it would be folly to attempt to contradict him or to interfere with him.

Job had always been impatient of delay; if there were anything to do, he would have it done on the moment. Hesitation found no place in his vocabulary. He often blundered in consequence; but he succeeded much better than those too cautious spirits whose hesitation too frequently permits the opportunity for action to pass away. But besides this impatience he had latterly become irritable at the slightest opposition to his wishes, and Michael would yield to anything rather than vex him.

He had been ‘considering,’ as he said, and he had come to the conclusion that the marriage which he and his old friend Holt had talked about when Polly and Michael were children should be brought about at once. The fact that there were other suitors in the field determined him upon prompt action.

He put on his best coat and his chimney-pot hat, which indicated that he was bound on business of importance. The gig was brought to the door by Michael himself. Job was standing on the step putting on his driving-gloves, which he had not worn for a long time now.

‘Won’t you let me drive you, dad?’

‘No, thank you, lad; I aint so far gone but I can drive the old mare yet. Why, a babe could do it, though she was a famous one to go in her time.’

Job had been an expert whip until rheumatism took possession of his right shoulder, and once he was started on the track of his driving exploits he would chatter away for hours. His great feat, of which he was never tired telling, was driving the mail coach from London to Chelmsford in mid-winter, the road all the way so

slippery that people could scarcely walk on it, and yet the mails arrived in good time and not one of the horses had been down! 'That *was* drivin', lad, wasn't it?' was the unvarying conclusion of the exciting narrative.

He took hold of the reins, placed one hand on the splashboard, the other on the rail of the seat, and attempted to ascend; but his foot missed the step twice. Still he would not allow Michael to assist him. At last he contrived to scramble in, and, although he panted a good deal, he felt proud of himself. Michael fastened the apron, and the old man started on his expedition.

The day was close and sultry, and by the time he reached the Meadow he felt as if all the marrow had been melted out of his old bones, as he told Sarah. He sat by the open window, wiping the perspiration from his head and talking to Sarah about the dairy, and the price they were getting for eggs and butter.

Polly had been sent for, and when she heard who had arrived she hastened into the house.

'You have almost taken my breath away, uncle. I am so glad to see you out again,' she cried as she hugged him.

'Aha, Polly,' he chuckled, 'there's life in the old dog yet!'

She brought him a mug of foaming ale. He took a long draught, smacked his lips, and drew breath more freely.

'That's better. Now sit down, child; I want to have a serious gossip with you.'

'Oh, don't be serious to-day, uncle; why, you haven't been here for months.'

'I'll come oftener now that I find myself able to get about again. But I must speak to you to-day.'

'What's it about?'

'About yourself and about Michael. You know it aint in nature that I can be long to the fore, and I want to see you settled and comfortable before I go.'

'You'll be with us a good many years yet, uncle,' she said, her eyes fixed on the ground, and fidgetting with hands and feet.

She did not like this, and she could not turn Job off with a laugh. Neither he nor Miss Walton guessed that they were just driving her in the direction in which they did not want her to go.

'Can't hope for that, Polly, can't hope for that; and so, as I was saying, I want to see you settled.'

'But I am settled.'

'No woman is settled till she's married. I like things done out of hand, when they are to be done, and I want you to name the day when you and Michael will go to church.'

‘Does he know you have come for this purpose?’ she asked in a low voice.

‘No, for he’s such a slow fellow that he’d have tried to stop me.’

She was relieved.

‘Well, uncle, I don’t know that I shall ever marry; and if I do—I’m sorry—but I’m not sure that it will be to Michael.’

Job fairly lost his temper at that declaration.

‘Then it’s that darned fellow Walton that’s got into your head. But you shan’t marry him.’

‘I’ll marry him to-morrow, if I like,’ she exclaimed indignantly.

‘Taken at your word, Polly,—marry me to-morrow,’ said Walton, putting his head in at the open window; whilst Jim, tied to the gate, champed his bit and pawed the earth.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

APRIL 1879.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XV.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

HE saw the quick flash of contempt in her eyes; he saw Job's face red and swollen with anger, his fist clenched as if, old man though he was, he would presently try to knock him down; and Walton felt that he had made a mistake. He hastened to explain.

'I beg your pardon, Miss Holt; I did not mean to be offensive; I asked Miss Hodsoll to mention that I would be here this morning with Jim, to let you see him go in harness. I fastened the reins to the gate; but, as there is nobody to watch him except Jones, and as he is inclined to be restive when left alone, I did not intend to go into the house. Seeing the window open and hearing your voice, I came forward and overheard what were to me very pleasant words indeed. That is a full and true confession of my sin; it was an accident which brought me here at the moment you spoke, and I am not sorry for it.'

He could not help adding the last words, which spoilt his explanation by revealing the audacity of his character.

Job now looked in a bewildered way from this glib-tongued fellow to Polly, and again at him, trying to make out how far she sanctioned this familiarity; for he could not understand any man behaving so without being privileged, or told at once to go about his business. If he had only known that Walton had come with the bold design of carrying off Polly for a drive with him—just to see how Jim could go in harness—he would have been still more bewildered.

Polly was at first startled, then angry with shame at the passion

which had betrayed her into such a foolish scrape, and next she was full of contempt for the man who seemed ready to take advantage of hasty words never intended for his ears. Remembering his sister's visit, and the suspicion that he must have been talking a great deal too confidently of the favour she had shown him, she was horrified to think of the use he might make of what he had just overheard. She wished her tongue had been cut out before she had spoken the words.

'Your explanation is unnecessary, Mr. Walton,' she said coldly. 'I am sorry you should have taken so much trouble as to bring the horse here; I am busy to-day, and cannot see you or him.'

'Does that mean I am to go away?' he asked in a tone of real disappointment.

'Ain't it plain enough?' exclaimed Job, who had somewhat recovered from his fury; 'if it ain't, then I'll tell you what we want—we want you to get off as quick as you can.'

Walton was not at all disturbed by Job's bluntness; he regarded him with a good-natured smile—which aggravated the old man more than any retort in words could have done—and then turned to Polly.

'All right, Mr. Hazell; but I would like Miss Holt to tell me herself. Am I to go?'

'If you please.'

'But it does not please me at all; only I wish to please you. Can I not wait till you have finished your business? Or may I not come back later? It is such a capital day.'

After what he had heard, he felt that he had some right to be importunate; and she, with quick instinct, knew that he felt so. Her position was such an awkward one that she found it difficult to speak quietly. The blood was still tingling in her cheeks, and she felt sure that to both men she appeared foolish and capricious. The awkwardness lasted only a few minutes, however, for her natural courage speedily asserted itself. She had something to do in order to escape from this dilemma and to prevent her words and conduct from being misinterpreted, and she was bold enough to speak the truth. There was no unkindness in her voice as she said—

'If you wish to please me, Mr. Walton, there are two things you will have to do——'

'I will do a thousand,' he interrupted.

She smiled at his impetuosity, and his face became radiant again; but at that the smile instantly disappeared. How difficult it was to avoid misunderstandings!

‘Two will be enough at present, thank you. I want you to go away just now and not return for a day or two, as Uncle Job and I have business matters to talk over: and I want you to forget the words you overheard. They were spoken in a foolish passion, and meant no more than that in my anger I was ready to say anything to prove that I would not be held in leading-strings.’

‘Quite right, quite right; and I’ll go at once,’ he said, lingering; ‘but—don’t tell me I am to believe that the words meant nothing.’

‘Absolutely nothing, except ill-temper,’ she answered firmly, looking him straight in the face so calmly, and with such truth in the bright eyes, that, in spite of hope and vanity, he *almost* believed her.

Job was restored to good humour; he chuckled, mopped his head, and grinned at the man who was in his eyes a bad specimen of a bad poacher.

‘I can’t believe you, because I don’t want to do so,’ said Walton with affected cheerfulness. ‘In the mean while I obey you and go; but I shall be back in a day or two, and then you must come out and see Jim.’

She made no reply. He lifted his hat to her, nodded to Job, and hurried to the gate. He was just in time, for Jim, who was not yet much accustomed to harness, and still less to be fastened to a gate without an attendant to coax and humour him, was becoming restive and threatening to kick the splash-board to pieces. Bones sat stolidly in front of the horse, his big saucer eyes watchful of any too violent movement on Jim’s part, which would have been the signal for him to give a warning bark. Bones was ugly, but his master declared that he could do everything except speak; and indeed the dog had acquired many useful accomplishments. He got up as soon as Walton approached, wagged his stump of a tail, and was evidently well pleased to be released from his watch.

As Walton buttoned the apron he glanced underneath the apple trees towards the house; but there was nobody visible at the window now. He gave Jim his head, and the horse started off at a rapid trot, his fine form and excellent action justifying all the praise his owner had bestowed upon him.

For the first time in his life Walton was vaguely conscious of a wish that his past career had been different: not that there was any repentance in the wish; he only thought that he would have had a better chance of winning Polly if he could have approached her with cleaner hands than he possessed. But there was no use in crying over spilled milk; and, after all, he had not been so bad as dozens of young fellows he had known, who were now settled down

into staid respectability with the wives of their choice, happy and prosperous. A fellow must sow his wild oats some time, you know, and he would count his as sown if Polly would only be kindly. He would give up the Oaks, the Goodwood, and—yes, he would even forswear the Derby. He would become respectable too; he would make friends with old Mr. Arnold, the vicar; he would send a present to Mr. Holroyd, the curate; and he would go to church regularly—at least, he would try. How could she resist the proof which all these sacrifices would present of his devotion? She could not if she were a human being.

But when all was done, might not Sobersides (that was his mental designation of Michael) step in with his confounded skill in doctoring cows and breeding sheep? and that would probably weigh down the scale against him. Well, he would learn to doctor cows and breed sheep too. It was not an unattainable knowledge; he would go to the vet. at once and begin to take lessons that very day. Farewell to billiards, farewell the revels at Elizabeth House, farewell all the pranks that make the bachelor's existence joyful; henceforth he would do nothing but what would please Polly.

She declared that she had only spoken in a passion! Just like a woman to try to hide her real feelings in order to tantalise a fellow the longer. He was not to be taken in by that hoax. Besides, in a passion both men and women reveal more of themselves than they imagine.

By the time he had made all these good resolutions and come to that conclusion about Polly's declaration he was close to Elizabeth House. He felt bound just to call and see how Sir Montague was after the exploits of the previous day. The gates were open, and he drove up to the door. A groom appeared and took the horse by the head as Walton jumped down.

‘Don't take him out, Mallett; I am not to stay.’

The baronet was in the library, weary of his books and himself; all his young friends were out fishing, and his liver made him a prisoner. He was therefore delighted to see Walton, who, after a very little persuasion, agreed to stay for luncheon. He really could not desert such a hospitable friend who wanted cheering up. Jim was put into the stable. Luncheon. Billiards (just a last game), and—Tom was later than usual in getting home that night, and he had made no progress in the study of veterinary surgery.

CHAPTER XVI.

DIPLOMACY AND PIGS.

THE next best thing to always doing right is, when one has done wrong, to have the courage to own it. Polly felt that she had done very wrong in allowing the vexation of a moment to produce the foolish words with which she had resented her guardian's interference in a matter that she thought belonged to her own most private and most sacred sentiments. She believed that on this point she would have questioned the authority even of a parent. This wilfulness was due to the fact that she had been brought up without knowing anything of the loving watchfulness and guidance of mother or father. Still, she was sensible of the impropriety of what she had done, and the more keenly so because Walton had overheard the words and would not accept her explanation of how they had come to be spoken. And how was she ever to escape the unpleasant position in which she had placed herself? It was no satisfaction to her to remember the tract she had read in childhood about the terrible consequences which befell a little boy on account of 'hasty words'—that was the title of the wise homily, and she might have been happy now if she had only taken its teaching more to heart. It was no comfort to know that most people speak words—ay, and do things—in haste of which they repent at bitter leisure, often seeking vainly to escape the memory of them by means of any distraction. There was only one course to pursue—that was, to face the difficulty.

These reflections galloped through her mind in a minute: then she gave Job a hug and a kiss, smiling coaxingly, and, with something like her own happy voice, said:

'Please, uncle, I have been a very naughty child, but you will forgive me this time, and I shall never do it again—if I can help it.'

Job did not observe the qualifying phrase, for he was in good humour again.

'All right, Polly, it was good sport. You did send that chap about his business cleverly. But we won't think any more about him; we'll go back to our own affairs and—'

'No, no, uncle, not to-day. You will come over to the sofa, take a nice rest, and as dinner is just ready, you'll stay and take a bit with us.'

And placing her arm under his, she almost lifted him out of the chair; but half-way to the sofa he released himself, and placing his hands on her shoulders, he looked at her admiringly.

‘Well, you have got muscles, Polly; that’s the right thing for a farmer’s wife. I can’t stay, though; Michael does not know where I am, and he’ll be on the look-out for me. Ha! ha! ha! I wish he had been here to see the way you ordered that chap to the right-about. I liked it, and he would have liked it, and it *was* a sight!’

Job laughed so heartily that he brought on a fit of asthmatical coughing which obliged him to sit down, and his gurgling mirth was heard between each spasm.

Polly hastened to the cupboard to procure some cough cordial. There was a faint shade of anxiety on her face, for she was troubled by the discovery that her guardian misunderstood the reasons for her dismissal of Walton, and fancied that in doing so she had acknowledged her readiness to accept Michael. This was worse than ever: in trying to steer a straight course out of the dilemma, she had caused both parties to believe the very opposite of what she meant.

She poured out the cordial and offered it to Job.

‘What’s that? Physic? I never take physic, and you ought to know that,’ he gasped. ‘Give me a mouthful of ale—none of your doctor’s stuff for me. Don’t believe I ever took anything of that sort in my life, barring one dose of castor oil. Maybe they gave me some, though,’ he added with a desire to be strictly accurate, ‘when I was a baby and didn’t know better. Same time, I ain’t going to make a druggist’s shop of my stomach now.’

The cough had subsided; but to prevent another attack he took the ale which had been promptly substituted for the cordial. Polly watched him, ready to render any little service he might require. She was certain that as soon as he had completely recovered his breath he would at once revert to the question about his son; and eager to say something that might turn his thoughts into another channel, she yet found herself at a loss how to accomplish her object. With a very unusual sensation of a slight fluttering in the breast, she saw, by the way he was wiping his mouth, that the attack was about to be renewed. She was right. Job held stubbornly to his point, and would not, or could not, understand the possibility of a mistake on his part, or of a desire on hers to act otherwise than he and her father had arranged long ago.

‘As I was saying, Polly, I want to see you and Michael started in harness together. You could work the two farms easy enough, and who knows what might come of it? Or, if you liked it better, one of the places might be given up by-and-by; for you both have a tidy bit of cash at your backs. Only there wouldn’t be

enough for you two to do if you gave up one of the places. We'll think about that; and now I want you to say when it's to be.'

She was distressed by this persistence. She was determined not to lose her temper again, and so, as a forlorn hope, she said:

'I'll have a talk with Michael about it. That's all I can say, and you must try to be content.'

He leaned back, and looked at her with a dull, puzzled expression. He could not work out the problem at all.

'Do you mean that you don't like the lad?' he asked slowly.

'I like him very much.'

'Then, what are you waiting for? I can't make out you wenches nowadays. In my time, when a couple were brought together and had a liking one for t'other, and everything was found right, they went to church and made themselves happy. Now, you go on playing fast and loose and getting up breaches of promises and giving no end of worry. There was no breaching in my courting days.' (This with a sigh, as he thought of the time gone by.)

'There shall be no breaches in our case either, uncle,' she answered, smiling in spite of her perplexity. Then, plucking up courage and boldly starting off on a new track—'But come out and see the pigs. I have two that before Christmas will be better than the one you got the Smithfield prize for.'

'You can't tell what a pig may come to,' was his irritable reply.

But his vanity had been touched, and by that means she accomplished what all her earnest entreaties had failed to do. He went out to see the pigs that were to eclipse his glory (although he did not believe that that could ever be done), and for the moment he forgot the real object of his visit—why, that Prize Pig of his had been the talk not only of the neighbourhood but of all England, he believed, and its like had never been seen before or since.

In the middle of the barn-yard was piled the refuse of stable and cowhouse, and here the large pigs were wallowing, grunting, and turning up the muck in search of dainty morsels, whilst the young ones scampered about at some game of their own invention, and darted hither and thither in wild confusion at the approach of their owner and her companion.

Job surveyed them all with a critical eye, and gave a qualified opinion of their condition and prospective value; but he saw nothing which could possibly rival his great pig. Polly was quite content so long as he talked about swine instead of a husband. She listened attentively to his practical and really useful sugges-

tions as to what she was to do in order to attain some measure of the success he had achieved in producing prime pork, and owned that she could only hope to come second to him. Then she led him to the sty where the two special swine were being prepared for the show. Both lay amongst the straw, and grunted when they heard the approach of some one, but, having been recently fed, were too lazy to get up.

'There!' she said proudly, 'don't you think they'll come to something? They have got just the sort of soft good-natured faces of those people who eat, sleep, take life easy, and grow fat.'

Job was in no hurry to commit himself to an opinion. By poking at them with the handle of a pitchfork he got them on their feet, and examined them carefully. At length:

'They'll do; you'll make something of them in time, but they'll never compare with my pig.'

Having delivered this verdict uncontradicted, he was satisfied with himself and with Polly. His honour and credit as the only farmer in the district who had won a Smithfield prize were safe. Besides, he had had the last word—a victory which seems to be a source of gratification to men as well as to women.

Polly again asked him to wait for dinner, but she did not press the invitation, for she was too fearful that if he stayed he would again open that troublesome subject which had been all the time uppermost in her thoughts. Job, however, was in a hurry to be off. The horse was put into the gig, and the last words Polly heard were:—

'I'll tell Michael he's to come and speak to you himself.'

CHAPTER XVII.

'AM I IN LOVE?'

It had been a day full of many and some painful emotions to Polly. She had sat almost quite silent throughout dinner; and this was a circumstance much too curious not to attract the attention of Sarah. Whenever the latter appeared dull or disinclined to talk, Polly had always attempted to cheer her by relating the progress of events out of doors, or by making some suggestion intended to give her pleasure. Sarah had been sulking a good deal since the discovery of Walton's new attachment, and she had been too selfishly absorbed in her own unhappy thoughts to observe any delicate change in the manner or conduct of her cousin. Conscious of the ungraciousness of this behaviour, she had made fierce efforts to overcome it; and Polly, not understanding the struggle that was going on, had laughed at her, teased

and scolded in turns, so that the sudden hush of the merry voice seemed like the abrupt darkening of the sun by heavy rain-clouds.

Sarah's face flushed, and she directed a quick, suspicious glance at the fair and now thoughtful face opposite, as the questions suggested themselves—

‘Has she discovered my feelings towards Walton? Is she sorry?—is she annoyed?’

But there was nothing in the expression of Polly's face to indicate displeasure, at any rate. Still, she was very unlike herself; on being spoken to she answered dreamily and after an interval, as if the sound of the question had come to her from afar; or she looked up hurriedly, as if caught in some foolish act, and for a few seconds made an effort to get up a conversation. But the eyes gradually drooped again, the words were uttered with evident effort, and slowly and more slowly, until she relapsed into silence.

Presently, Sarah was surprised by the rattle of a knife and fork falling on a plate, and the exclamation—

‘Good gracious!—*can* it be?’

‘Is there anything the matter? What is it that is amusing you so vastly?’

Some very comical idea had presented itself to Polly, and, in a low musical tone, she was laughing at it with such intense enjoyment that Sarah had to repeat her question.

‘Something so droll, that I cannot say a word about it until I am quite sure that I know what it is myself.’

The answer appeared to Sarah as droll as the subject of her cousin's mirth could be, however absurd its nature. But she did not invite confidence: indeed, she was anxious to avoid it, for she feared what that confidence might involve, and she could not feel responsible for what wickedness she might speak or do, should it be discovered that Polly's fancy—*she* could not call it love yet—was veering round from Michael Hazell to Tom Walton. So long as the passion rested entirely on one side, she could still vaguely clutch at the straw of hope that he might yet remember the past and turn to her. But she knew that if Polly yielded, even in the least degree, hope must give place to despair. So, for both their sakes, she shrank from seeking her cousin's confidence.

Polly had been sensible of this change in Sarah, without realising its meaning; and not being one to reveal her inmost thoughts, except under the magnetic power of sympathy, she had said little about various events of recent date—events trifling in themselves, but of vital importance to a couple of girls the boundary of whose world was for the most part that of the shire in

which they lived. Still, in her present mood she was inclined to be communicative.

‘Did you know that Mr. Walton was here this morning, and Uncle Job was so angry that I had to pack him off about his business with very little ceremony?’

‘Yes, I saw him going away.’

‘And did he look very dejected, poor fellow?’

‘I can’t say he did. Would you have liked him to feel so?’

There was something shrewish in the voice, and there was a great clatter in gathering up the plates.

‘Liked it?’ said Polly, opening her eyes. ‘No; I would have been sorry.’

‘Why?’ (sharply, but without looking up.)

‘Because I don’t like to vex anybody; and although he was a little impudent, he meant kindly and I did not want to hurt him. But I know what you will say—that’s my vanity; I am just wanting everybody to think nice things about me. If that is so, I am sure to die an old maid; for I shall be like the old man with his ass, and will please nobody.’

She laughed again at that brilliant prospect, and rose to put on her hat. Sarah carried some dishes to the kitchen, and did not return to the room until after Polly had gone out. She foresaw danger; Walton was winning his way. Making allowance for all the too acute perceptions of a jealous heart, she still saw danger. She owned to herself that she was jealous—almost envious, and she wished that she could hide herself away in some dark place where she could neither see nor hear anything that was taking place. In the darkness of her own room at night she had cried bitterly; she had tried to pray for strength, and for a little while she would be calm. But sleep brought her only unpleasant dreams; she was glad to leave her bed long before anyone else was astir; and then the reality seemed to be worse than the torture of her thoughts and dreams. The unconsciousness and the mirth of her cousin seemed to mock her; and she felt her heart growing hard as her face grew dark and cold.

In the meadows, throughout the afternoon, Polly was in the same singular mood she had displayed at dinner-time. Now lively and active, quick to see what must be done that day and what might be left undone; and presently abstracted, walking about with head bent, thinking or dreaming, and altogether oblivious to the things and people around her. On more than one occasion old Carter was obliged to raise his voice to a considerable pitch in order to attract her attention, when he required directions for some part of the work in hand. Then she would

turn to him with one of those starts which at dinner had aroused Sarah's suspicions that there was something wrong.

'It's plain enough, Carter; get in as much as you can this afternoon. The wind is from the west, and I don't like these clouds. The forenoon was too quiet and too close: and now here is this fresh breeze. I believe we'll have rain before morning.'

Carter went away, and as soon as he approached his wife, who was the leader of a busy group, he delivered himself of a remark which he had made twice before within the last hour or so. He was a man slow to form an idea, but once having got hold of it, he made the most of it by frequent iteration.

'I say, missus, them blackguard gipsies have given the mistress a skear, she ain't like herself nohow. Never seed her so afore.'

'She needn't be skeared for them,' said Toby, who was close by helping to pile the hay on a cart, 'I see them myself trampin' Chelmsford way this mornin', and didn't we give 'em a skear last night! They won't come here in a hurry again. Lord! wasn't it a sight, the way Master Hazell heaved that chap out of the barn just as though he'd been a cricket-ball, and he was a-heaving it at the wickets—that was you and me.'

Toby expressed his enjoyment in the remembrance of the scene by giving vent to a loud guffaw. But his mother took a more serious view of the position:

'If she be skeared, why don't she get wed and have some one to look after the house and herself too?'

'That's what I says,' commented another woman, glad of an opportunity to pause in her work and to rest on the long shaft of a rake.

The other women followed suit, and formed a picturesque line, evidently prepared for full ten minutes' gossip. But Carter had imbibed some of his mistress's notions of discipline, and before they had rightly settled down to the brief rest they had expected to enjoy, he started them off again with the announcement that they might expect rain, and must make hay while the sun shone.

Polly was glad when the work of the day was over, and now she perpetrated another piece of eccentricity. Instead of following the labourers towards the house, as had been her invariable custom, she turned towards the river, and walked as if she were looking for something in the grass. She reached the stile, mounted one step, and seated herself on the top bar.

On the other side was the road, beyond that a stretch of green, then a row of willows drooping over the water. Looking eastward she could see the grey tower of the church peeping from amongst the trees. The dark clouds which had appeared in the west were

now transformed by the soft warm glow of a summer sunset, and the river flashed like a prism as it hurried along.

Polly had always been inclined to see the bright side of everything; and at the present moment, although much exercised in mind, she saw nothing particularly dark in her surroundings. The only trouble was that other people seemed determined that she should marry, whether she would or no. She had not thought of the matter seriously—never, indeed, except as an event that might take place in the far distant future; and then there had always been a shadowy form by her side, which she made out to be that of Michael. Now, she was compelled to think seriously of the matter, and the exclamation she had uttered at dinner, when completed, would have read:

‘Can it be that I am in love?’

With a sensation of fluttering wonder she was asking herself the question over and over again, without being able to find any satisfactory answer. She did love Michael as she had done ever since she could remember; but it was not that kind of love which made her feel that she could not exist without him. She thought she could get on very well without him. . . . After some time, she would not like to try it.

Walton? . . . Well, he was amusing, and there was something attractive even in his impudence. People said disagreeable things about him; but then, people said disagreeable things about everybody. She could count half a dozen families, within her own limited experience, rendered miserable by what ‘other people said;’ and so she was resolved never to allow gossip to interfere with her judgment. She had seen nothing worse in Walton than that he had been very obstinate in refusing to take ‘no’ for his answer. But Uncle Job was just as bad, and it seemed as if she really must marry somebody in order to dispose of the whole question.

But ‘Am I in love?’ she repeated to herself, and all her reflections tended towards the assurance that she was not.

She wished that she had been blessed with some friend of experience whom she might have consulted in the difficulty; she now began to regret that her time had been so much occupied at home that she had never had the inclination to form friendships out of doors. Sarah had been enough to satisfy all the cravings for companionship she had hitherto known; but Sarah had been so queer of late that she could not consult her.

There was Mrs. Tyler, of the Brook Farm, a sweet-natured motherly woman, who would have been ready to do anything to serve her; then there was Miss Arnold, the Vicar’s daughter, a quiet beau-

tiful lady, who, it was said, had been crossed in love long ago, and whose advice in big and little things was always wise and kind.

But Polly began to laugh at herself and to blush a little as she thought of going about asking, 'Please can you tell me if I am in love, and which of these beaux am I to marry?'

Absurd!

She sprang from the stile in a state of high irritation at her own folly. If the feeling were not strong enough to enable her to determine for herself, she would just wait until it proved to be so. Then, if she should think advice necessary, she would write to her aunt, Mrs. Fyfe, of Drumquhair in Scotland. She was her mother's sister, and the proper person to consult in such a matter, although Polly had not seen her since she had married and gone with her husband to the north.

Polly was anxious to be just to Michael and just to Walton, but she felt that, in order to be so, she must be just to herself likewise.

There was another person whose conduct was rather eccentric on this same evening.

Sarah had seen the haymakers hieing homeward at their accustomed hour, and expected Polly every moment. She did not appear; tea waited half an hour, and Sarah went out to look for her. She stood at the foot of the orchard, and looking across the low hedge, her hands forming an arch over her eyes in order to concentrate vision, she scanned the meadows without discovering her cousin.

Returning to the house, she found Zachy Rowe just about to knock at the door. He had brought a parcel from the village for Miss Holt.

'Who is it from?'

Zachy had not forgotten the insult in the lane, but he was of a forgiving nature when bread and cheese and ale were in sight; and besides, he was fond of showing his knowledge of all the business in which he was engaged.

'Believe it's from Mister Walton,' he said, with a grin and a nod, as much as to say, 'There's more in it than you would think.'

A curious light glimmered in Sarah's eyes, and she half closed them to conceal it. Zachy was taken into the kitchen and seated by the large white deal table. There he found all his good opinion of Miss Hodsoll return to him, magnified many times by the good things with which she supplied him in more abundance than usual.

'Did you hear about the visit we had from the gipsies, Zachy?'

‘Yes, miss, I heerd som’at on it. They were lifted out o’ the barn with pitchforks, I was told, and one chap was hurt bad.’

‘Nobody was hurt; but Mr. Hazell was sent for, and he turned them out, then he stayed here all night to protect us—he was very kind.’

‘He’s the right sort, he is, and ready for any half-dozen of them varmint, if ever man was.’

Zachy spoke with his mouth full, and was somewhat indistinct. Two of the maidens entered the kitchen just then, and as Sarah went into the dairy, they took up the story of the night’s adventures, and related sufficient horrors which had never had any existence except in their own terrified imaginations, to supply the old postman with gossip for a month, to be repeated with his own improvements at every house at which he had to call during the day, and to a gaping audience in the tap-room of the ‘Grey Goose’ in the evenings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHISPERS.

WALTON was most diligent in his attendance at the Meadow; but from the morning on which he had surprised her in conversation with Job Hazell, he was unable to find Polly. She was never in the house when he called—at least, so he was told; and she was never in the fields when he went thither to look for her.

He was patient at first: this was only shyness or coquettishness on her part, and he regarded it as a token in his favour. She had said that she would not see him for a few days, and she was no doubt taking time to make up her mind. But his patience—never remarkable—soon gave out, and two circumstances hastened the period of its duration.

Returning home from one of his futile attempts to see Polly, and with the determination to write to her for an explanation, he entered the house in no pleasant humour. As he was passing the parlour door it opened, and Miss Walton, with her garden hat on as if just going out, met him.

‘Oh, you are home early to-day,’ she said, as if she had not seen him from the window. ‘There is a parcel here for you.’

‘Who is it from?’ he asked eagerly, entering the room.

Alice tittered, and Carry tried to hide a smile. Miss Walton looked on with dignified composure.

It was a small parcel, but the address was evidently written by a lady, although the characters were formed with bold, firm strokes, which at first glance gave them the appearance of a man’s penmanship. He felt sure that this was Polly’s writing, and he was glad to

think that she had, of her own accord, sent him an explanation of her persistent avoidance of him. He did not pause to consider how unlikely it was that her explanations could assume such bulk.

He tore off the cover, and inside found another cover. It was the parcel (containing a gold bracelet and a note) which he had sent to Polly. It had not been opened, for the seal was still unbroken. No word accompanied it. He snatched up the outer covering, which had fallen on the floor, and examined it carefully: there was nothing on it except the address.

‘Was there no message brought with this?’ he asked, still looking at the paper as if he expected some hidden sign to appear presently.

‘No; did you expect any?’ replied Miss Walton.

‘Well—yes. Who brought it?’

‘Rowe, the postman.’

‘Did he not say anything?’

‘Oh yes, as usual, he had a great deal to say, but he had nothing new to tell us.’

Walton became conscious of the looks which were being interchanged by his younger sisters, and with an angry glance at them, he took the parcel and hurried up to his own room. It was a small chamber adjoining his bed-room, and chiefly used by him on wet days as a corner in which he could be safe from the tongues of the sistern, and be at peace to smoke and read novels of the very fastest school that his fast friends recommended to him. There were writing materials on a little side-table, and whenever he did make up his mind to the exertion of penning a letter, it was done here, where he was secure from interruption.

He placed the rejected parcel, pens, ink, and paper on the centre table; filled his pipe, and seated himself in an easy chair, throwing his right leg over the arm of it and swinging his foot vigorously, as he emitted great clouds of smoke.

He was now ready for composition. His ideas came faster than usual, and he had mentally written half a dozen letters in as many minutes—this one reproachful, that pathetic, the next indignant, and so on—and he had just come to the resolution that he would not stand this humbug any longer, when all his grand sentences were scattered to whatever quarter unrecorded thoughts go to, by the opening of the door.

The ‘Angel’ entered very quietly, closing the door after her. She advanced to the table and rested her knuckles on it with much gravity. Minerva was ready to instruct a pupil.

‘What are you wanting now, Lizzie?’ said Walton, annoyed that he had lost beyond recovery so many fine flowing phrases.

‘I have come to speak to you seriously, Tom—I say seriously, about matters which I do not think fit for the girls’ ears.’

‘I don’t see that they can be fit for my ears either, then. I wish you would leave me alone just now. I have something to do.’

‘I must speak to you before you write that letter;’ and she pointed to the still blank paper.

‘How do you know I was going to write a letter?’ he said petulantly. ‘And if I choose to do so, I don’t see that I am bound to submit it to your censorship.’

Miss Walton was quite insensible to his displeasure. She sat down with the air of one who did not mean to be turned from her purpose.

‘I am quite aware of the small value you place on anything I say; but at the same time it is just possible that a word in season, even from my lips, may be of use to you.’

‘It seems to me, Lizzie, that your words are always in season—as you think. But as the season lasts all the year round, it becomes tiresome after a while. Come on: what is it? I want to get a little time to myself.’

She was not disturbed in the least by his satire or his impatience.

‘You were going to write to Mary Holt.’

‘Just so.’

‘And you were going to make all kinds of appeals to her to relent and give you an audience.’

‘How the devil do you know she ever refused to see me?’ he exclaimed angrily and flushing; for the fact thus presented to him was most disagreeable.

‘I am sorry you should lose your temper and your manners so soon. I only know what is the common talk—that you are running after her from morning till night; that she is making a jest and a boast of your attentions.’

‘It’s a lie!’ he cried, starting up and beginning to pace the floor agitatedly, lighting and relighting his pipe; and trying hard to maintain his self-control.

He knew his sister; there was always a substratum of truth in what she said, and his difficulty was to discover where the superstructure of fiction and malice began. He was often puzzled by the closeness with which she hit him; and she was frequently so near to facts, that he sometimes doubted whether or not he was doing her justice in taking so many grains of salt with everything she said.

‘I am very sorry for you, Tom,’ said Miss Walton, quite

gravely; 'I am aware that nothing I can say will alter your determination; but I wished to save you some annoyance. Miss Holt is engaged to young Hazell—he stayed with her all night on the pretence that she was afraid of some tramps she had turned out of the barn!' (Here there was as near an approach to a laugh as the 'Angel' ever indulged in, except when Sir Montague Lewis was at hand.) 'And I am informed that your folly affords a great deal of amusement not only to Mary Holt and her friends, but to the whole country. Why, it is even a standing jest in every tap-room in the village.'

Nothing stings a vain man more sharply than being laughed at; even men whose vanity is held fairly within bounds will wince under an infliction of that sort. Walton was an excellent target for such a shaft, and his sister knew it. There was, however, this peculiar condition of affairs between the two: he was half-conscious of his own weakness; he knew that she knew it thoroughly; and he had many a time vented mental anathemas upon her for the positive genius she displayed in detecting the vulnerable places of his nature, and in choosing the right moments when her stabs would have most effect.

As, for instance: just now he was vexed and put out by Polly's success in avoiding him, and really pained by the conviction that she wished to avoid him. At that moment the 'Angel' came down upon him with the information that he was the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood on account of his partiality for the Mistress of the Meadow. He felt vicious; he would have liked to let loose his passion and to give his sister such a rating as he thought she deserved. But he restrained his temper for no higher reason than that he believed the display of it would only gratify her. That was the only motive potent enough to suppress the words which were already in his throat.

They were so far well-matched: if she understood his weakness, he had a pretty clear idea of hers; and he could meet her with equal weapons when he was in a mood to try conclusions with her. At present he was excited and nervous, and this gave her the advantage for the moment. He made an effort; and by-and-by she was surprised to see him calmly refilling his pipe, and to hear him speaking with a clever assumption of his ordinary tone of cynical indifference to everything and everybody.

'You have often told me, Lizzie, that I was a useless creature—good for nothing to anybody. It is a satisfaction to learn on the same authority that I have been useful to a whole county of people in affording them amusement. I wish I could say as much for you.'

It was his turn to be surprised now; in general she resented his sneers; now she preserved her temper admirably.

‘We are not to quarrel, brother. I am quite resolved on that. All that I want is to do the best we can for our mother and for our sisters.’

She broke down a little at this point, and, with a pretence of not wishing to be observed, wiped her eyes with a handkerchief. That always upset Walton, although he did not believe in it at all. He deliberately turned his back, and stared through the window at the trees and the green fields beyond. He was looking in the direction of the Meadow.

She overcame her emotion and continued:

‘I own that I do not like Mary Holt, and sincerely wish that you had thought of somebody else—Alice Harwood, for instance. But if you are determined to make her your wife, I would like you—I would implore you—to consider well what you are doing, for your own sake and for our sakes. I am selfish in saying that, I know; but there is often some common sense even in selfishness.’

‘What *is* it you are driving at?’

‘That you should make sure of yourself: that you should make sure that she is necessary to your happiness. If she is, then I have nothing more to say: our mother and our sisters will have nothing more to say—although it will be hard for us to turn out of the old house and enter a new home.’

‘I don’t see any necessity for the exodus.’

‘It will be imperative,’ said Miss Walton very emphatically. ‘We could not live in the same house with Miss Holt, whatever you may do.’

He did not turn from the window, but smoked, and stared vacantly at space, his brows wrinkled.

‘Then how am I to make sure of myself, as you put it?’

‘By going away for a little while. Remember, if she takes you she breaks an old standing engagement—’

‘She never was engaged,’ he interrupted sharply; ‘I have it on the best authority.’

‘We won’t discuss the question. But suppose you go away, say for a fortnight; that will give you time to think over everything, and to feel settled in your own mind as to what you mean to do.’

‘Where am I to go to?’

‘The Newmarket races are just coming on. Sir Montague Lewis is going, I know, and he is to take the drag. Suppose you go with him—I am sure he would like you to go with him.’

Walton turned round quickly, and regarded his sister with some amazement. He wondered if the Millennium were at hand, when he heard Elizabeth, who had always most strenuously opposed his proclivities for horse-races, actually advising him to go to Newmarket. She must be very much in earnest in her desire to get him out of the way.

'That's not a bad idea, Lizzie,' he said slowly, not yet quite sure of his ground; 'and I can go by train, supposing Lewis does not ask me.'

'But I know he will ask you,' she replied, with something like a flush of pride in the sense of superior knowledge. 'And when you have done with the races, you might go on to London and arrange business matters with Mr. Smith.'

This proposal was not quite so pleasing as the other to Walton. Mr. Smith was a solicitor, and held a mortgage over a part of Walton Abbey on account of one of his clients. Tom always disliked the necessity of meeting this gentleman; but as it had to be done, and as the necessity would afford him the opportunity of spending a week or a fortnight in town, he agreed to this arrangement also.

'Very well, it's a bargain; but I make no promises.

'When you come home, we can consider what you wish to do, and what you ought to do.'

Miss Walton retired, very well pleased with the result of her interview.

Tom finished his pipe whilst he sat on the arm of his chair, mechanically tossing a penny, and at each toss calling 'head' or 'tail.' He wanted to find out whether his sister was acting on his behalf or her own, and that was the way he tried to settle the question. He went downstairs, took his hat and a stick from the stand in the hall, whistled for Bones, and sallied forth, taking his way across the fields.

He was in a much better humour than when he had gone up to write that letter which he had composed so many times without putting a word of it on paper. Why should he care about a girl who took every opportunity of slighting him? She had returned his present without a word of explanation or thanks—without even having looked at it! And yet he himself had heard her say that she was ready to marry him, or something to that effect; he was indifferent to details when they happened to be inconvenient. Then, she had chosen young Hazell as her protector during a night of anxiety. Now, there was the very occasion on which he could have been of use to her, and she had not thought it worth her while to say, 'Come and help me.' Hazell certainly did know

how to manage cows, pigs, and sheep : but Walton felt quite equal to him when it came to be a question of turning a couple of vagabonds out of the house. There was a double insult which he could not understand after what he had heard.

It was a good idea, that he should go away for a time. People were laughing at him, were they ? Well, he would show them that they had the laugh on the wrong side. He would do what a man should do under the circumstances : he would make a proud woman humble. He would be cool and indifferent as herself——

And all the time his steps were directed towards the Meadow Farm.

The simple incident of the tramps' visit to the Meadow barn, and their being turned out, had been passed along at first in a whisper, and, gathering strength and exaggeration in its progress, it became ultimately a very serious event. Much to his own amusement and surprise, Michael found himself elevated to the position of a hero ; and the more he laughed at the ridiculous perversity which represented him as rescuing a forlorn damsel from the villanous hands of a whole gang of gipsies, the more convinced people became that there had been a desperate struggle, and that Polly had no choice but to marry her protector immediately in reward for his devotion.

The whispers were frequently accompanied by many sly nods and winks, which were anything but agreeable to Michael ; for, whatever these signs might imply, he felt sure that they would vex Polly, and cause her to regard the trifling service he had been able to render her as a misfortune rather than a satisfaction. Luckily, he had not only a natural contempt for gossip, but he had firm nerves, and could laugh when a weak man would have been thrown into a frenzy of passion.

Walton had nothing of this strength : he had been slighted by Polly ; he had been outdone in service to her by Michael at the very moment when he had felt himself most secure of winning her. He had given the challenge to Hazell with confidence in the result of the struggle for her favour, and therefore, apart from any matter of sentiment, he was acutely sensitive to the idea of being beaten in such a contest.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAD NEWS.

It had been a day of parching heat ; and the cool air of the evening was grateful to the perspiring labourers. Toby Carter



Can you tell me if Miss Holt is about?

had been harrowing, and when the glad time of release came he unyoked his horses, leaped blithely on to the back of one, and the other followed its neighbour towards the river with only an occasional word of direction from the rider. Toby was sitting sideways, his uncouth body swaying from the hips with every step of the horse; and, keeping time to the motion, he chanted a rural ballad about a herdsman bold who had been such a successful rearer of sheep that he had won all the prizes at all the agricultural shows in the kingdom; had married the master's daughter fair, and by and by had become the master of the farm himself. The song ended with this cheerful prediction:

And this here song I sings to *you*,
For to en-cour-age you young men:
Be faith-ful all your *doo*-ties to,
And [a very long note] you will catch a good fat hen.

The placid content of the ruddy-faced lad, as he trolled forth his ballad without the slightest suspicion that there was anything mercenary or unbecoming in the inducement offered to 'you young men' to be good and attentive, was in keeping with the pastoral sweetness of the atmosphere. He took his horses to the water; they went in up to the knees, and drank until he checked them: then they turned patiently homeward and he resumed his song.

Passing up by the side of the hedge which bordered the red field he had been harrowing, he was brought to a halt by this question:

'I say, my lad, can you tell me if Miss Holt is about?'

Whatever romantic notions might have been rambling in Toby's head were instantly dispelled. He placed his two hands on the horse, lifted himself up, and looking over the hedge saw Tom Walton. He touched his cap respectfully, for Tom, by his indolence and affectation of having nothing to do but amuse himself, had obtained the character of being a 'born gentleman,' amongst those who regarded the privilege of being idle as the first requisite of gentility.

'They've been dipping sheep to-day, sir, and I believe the missus is in the shed at top of the meadow. She has been put out a bit, they tell me, because a sheep she brought up by hand herself has took bad with the dipping, and——'

Toby would have continued, and given a full account of how the mother of the lamb had died, how the missus had taken to the young one, brought it up well and hearty, and then had turned it out to take its chance in the world with the rest of the flock; but Walton had started off at a smart pace as soon as he learned where Polly was likely to be found.

She was kneeling beside a January lamb, and doing all she could to coax it to eat, upbraiding herself all the time for having turned it out too soon.

Polly had not made such desperate efforts to avoid Walton as he had imagined. She had told the maidens in the house that he was not to be admitted until she had intimation of his arrival. In the fields she had taken no precautions at all. His frequent disappointment, therefore, was not entirely due to her; but Sarah had overheard her instructions, and she was very particular in having them carried out to the letter—and beyond it sometimes.

There was neither surprise nor agitation in her manner when he entered the shed; indeed, if his eyes and feelings did not deceive him, she seemed to be pleased by his arrival. She inquired about his mother, and (in a less cordial manner, however) she hoped his sisters were well; then she drew his attention to the pet she was nursing.

Carter had turned a trough upside down, and was comfortably seated upon it admiring the work of his mistress, and ready to do anything she might direct. The other men, having finished their day's work, were arranging things for the night.

Walton never in his life so sincerely regretted his ignorance of the general business of a farm as at this moment; he had never before been so conscious of time and opportunity wasted. If that fellow Hazell were to turn up now, he would be sure to do something for the brute that would set it all right, and so make a fool of him again.

Michael, however, did not appear. The men having finished their work, went away, and only Carter remained—apparently ready to stay all night, if his mistress wished him to do so. Walton wanted to get rid of him, and so he made a desperate plunge into unknown regions—

‘I don't believe you will ever be able to bring it round,’ he said authoritatively; ‘but if there is a chance, it will only be by carrying it up to the house and keeping it warm at the kitchen fire.’

‘We can try that, at any rate. Here, Carter.’

The man took the sheep in his arms, and marched off to the house. Walton was proud of the knowledge he had displayed, and very much gratified that he had so easily gained his object.

He assisted Polly to rise, and walked with her towards the house, his only difficulty being to prevent her from walking too fast. It *was* delightful to be walking with her alone in the Meadow: twilight had never seemed so beautiful to him before; he had never heard the birds sing so merrily before, and his blood was leaping so gaily in his veins, that only his sense of what an

absurd figure he should make stopped him from skipping across the grass to the tune of the country dance which was ringing in his ears.

He saw that they were drawing near to the house, and yet he had said nothing, although he had a great deal to say. He made another venture :

‘ I suppose it’s no use asking you to walk down to the foot of the meadow with me ? ’

She looked at him with an expression of surprise, and he affected to smile, as if it were only one of his jokes.

‘ What should we do that for ? Sarah will be waiting tea, and I thought perhaps you would come in and take a cup with us.’

‘ With pleasure ; but it seemed so pleasant to be walking with you, that I did not like to see the end of our journey so near. Besides, I had such a lot of things to say to you, and amongst the rest—Goodbye.’

‘ Oh, you are going away somewhere ? ’

‘ Yes ! ’

He uttered the monosyllable with the solemnity of a man who was pleading guilty to a charge of high treason.

‘ And are you to be a very long time away ? ’

He tried to imagine that there was a note of regret in the question, and at the same time he felt that it was rather ridiculous to make such a fuss about going away for a fortnight, the chief object being to enjoy himself.

‘ Not so very long,’ he said cheerily. ‘ Only a week or two, but that will seem an age to me.’

‘ Why ? ’

‘ Because I shall not be able to see you.’

‘ But you will have this compensation,’ she said, laughing : ‘ during your absence you will be able to forget me.’

‘ Impossible.’

‘ Just so ; that is what everybody says. I have felt it myself. Somebody has been staying with us, and I thought her so very agreeable, that I never could get on without her ; but a few days after she had gone, I found myself so busy with the affairs of the farm that I had no time to think of anybody. Take my advice, Mr. Walton : if at any time you want to forget a person or thing, keep your head and hands hard at work.’

‘ You ought to have been a man.’

‘ Do you think so ? It has often been said of me, and sometimes I have myself thought there was a mistake at my birth.’

‘ I am sure there was, for you continually made me feel that I am such an ignorant useless creature that I am ashamed of myself,

although I am not, as a rule, much troubled with excess of modesty.'

'You own your errors very frankly, at any rate, and that is a good sign.'

'Ay, but I am speaking to you.'

'Very well, come in and have some tea, and by that time you may be strong enough to speak even to Carter. I really am anxious about that lamb; and Michael Hazell is away from home to-day.'

That was like a wasp's sting to Walton, and very much interfered with his pleasure. However, he went in, took tea, and exerted himself to the utmost to amuse the girls—Polly and Sarah. They succeeded in passing a very pleasant evening, and Sarah had been so particular about the supper, that Walton expressed high satisfaction, and she was happy in consequence.

Polly often listened to the sounds which seemed to betoken the approach of some one, but she never lost her good-humour, and was always ready to laugh at any joke that passed.

The mirth at the Meadow reflected a deep shadow at Marshstead. Michael had gone to Bishop's Stortford early in the forenoon: thence he had gone to London, and it was late at night before he reached home. He had to take a long drive across country in the dark; for his anxiety had caused him to miss the last train which would have taken him to Dunthorpe.

There had been no commotion in the village until late at night, and then it was easily settled by shutting the doors of the bank at the usual hour. But at Bishop's Stortford there was a crisis, and the doors of the bank closed at half-past one o'clock. Then Michael had gone to London to make inquiries, for Polly's sake.

Job was enjoying his pipe and his beer when his son reached home.

'Well, lad, you look tired. Take som'at to drink, and tell us the news.'

Michael did take something to drink, and sat down with every sign of being exceedingly tired.

'It's lucky we have nothing to do with the County Bank, dad.'

'Why so?'

'Because it's bankrupt, and nobody will ever get a penny out of it.'

Job laid down his pipe, stared at his son, and then almost screamed—

'Lord A'mighty! . . . THEN, POLLY'S RUINED!'

(To be continued.)

Oxford and Cambridge Rowing.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

THE records of the last eighteen boat-races between Cambridge and Oxford indicate clearly enough the existence of a difference of style in the rowing of the two universities, a circumstance quite as plainly suggested by the five successive victories of Cambridge in the years 1870-74, as by the nine successive victories of Oxford which preceded them. For it is, or should be, known that the victories of Cambridge only began when Morrison, one of the finest Oxford oarsmen, had taught the Cambridge men the Oxford style, so far as it could be imparted to rowers accustomed, for the most part, in intercollegiate struggles, to a different system. With regard to the long succession of Oxford victories which began in 1861, and which, be it noticed, followed on Cambridge successes obtained when the light-blue stroke rowed in the Oxford style, I may remark that, viewing the matter as a question of probabilities, it may safely be said that the nine successive victories of Oxford could not reasonably be regarded as accidental. The loss of three or four successive races would not have sufficed to show that there was any assignable difference in the conditions under which the rival universities encountered each other on the Thames. In cases where the chance of one or other of two events happening is exactly equal, there will repeatedly be observed recurrences of this sort. But when the same event recurs so often as nine successive times, it is justifiable to infer that the chances are *not* precisely—or perhaps even nearly—equal. I believe I shall be able to indicate the existence of a cause quite sufficient to account for the series of defeats sustained in the years 1861-69 by Cambridge, and for the change of fortune experienced when for a while the Cambridge oarsmen adopted the style of rowing which has prevailed for many years at the sister university.

I may premise that Cambridge has an important advantage over Oxford in the fact that she has a far larger number of men to choose from in selecting a university crew. It might seem to many, at first sight, that as good a crew might well be selected from three hundred as from five hundred boating-men; because it is not to be supposed that either number would supply many more than eight first-rate oarsmen. But it must be remembered that

there are first-rate oarsmen *and* first-rate oarsmen. The unpractised eye may detect very little difference between the best and the worst oarsmen in such crews as Oxford and Cambridge yearly send to contend for the blue-riband of the river. But differences exist; and if the best man of a crew were replaced by one equal in rowing ability to the worst, or *vice versâ*, an important difference would be observed in the time of rowing over the racing course, under similar conditions of wind, tide, and so forth. Accordingly, a large field for the selection of the men is a most important advantage. Taking, for instance, the five hundred rowing men of Cambridge and dividing them into two sets—one of three hundred men, corresponding to the three hundred rowing men of Oxford, and the other of two hundred men—we see that the first set ought to supply a crew strong enough to meet Oxford, and the second a crew nearly as strong. Now, if the best men of the two Cambridge crews thus supposed to be formed are combined—say five taken from the first and three from the second, all the inferior men being struck out—a far stronger crew than either of the others would undoubtedly be formed.

So that if Cambridge were generally the winner in these contests, the Oxonians would be able to account for their want of success in a sufficiently satisfactory manner. The successive defeats sustained by the Cambridge crews in 1861–69 are therefore so much the less readily explained as due to mere accident, by which of course I mean simply such an accidental circumstance as that better oarsmen chanced to be at Oxford than at Cambridge in these years, not to accident occurring in the race itself.

Several reasons were assigned from time to time for the repeated victories of Oxford. Some of these may conveniently be examined here, before discussing what I take to be the true explanation.

Some writers in the papers advanced the general proposition that Oxford men are as a rule stronger and more enduring than Cambridge men. They did not tell us why this should be the case—to what peculiar influences it was due that the more powerful and energetic of our English youth should go to one university rather than the other. No evidence of this peculiarity could be found in the university athletic sports, in which success was, as it has since been, very equally divided. And what made the theory the less satisfactory was the circumstance that it afforded no explanation of the early triumphs of the Cantabs, who won seven of the nine races they rowed against Oxford. Of these races five were rowed from Westminster to Putney, a course two miles longer than the present course from Putney to Mortlake. A race

over such a course and in the heavier old-fashioned racing-boats was a sufficient test of strength and endurance ; yet the Cambridge men managed to win four out of these five events, and that not by a few seconds, but in three instances by upwards of a minute. If there were any reason for conceiving that Oxonians were as a rule stronger than Cantabs in the years 1861-69, there is at least no reason for conceiving that any change can have taken place in the time between the earlier races and that during which Oxford won so persistently. And as the earlier races show no traces of any difference such as was insisted upon by many journalists in the latter part of the period of the Oxford successes, we may reasonably conclude that the difference had no real existence.

Another theory resembling the preceding was also often urged. It was said repeatedly in the papers that Cambridge traditions encouraged a light flashy stroke, pretty to look at but not effective ; that, again, Cambridge rowed the first part of the course well but exhausted themselves before the conclusion of the race, through their over-anxiety to get the advantage of their opponents in the beginning of the contest. Critics undertook to say that the Oxford men 'rowed within themselves' at first, reserving their strength for the last mile or two of the course. Now, it will presently appear that there does exist in a certain peculiarity of what may justly be called the Cambridge style, a true cause for want of success, and even for such a repeated series of defeats as the light-blue flag sustained in 1861-69. But the Cambridge style rowed during these years was very far from being a flashy style. On the contrary, the old Cambridge style, which is still too often seen in College contests, and has within the last four years been seen on the Thames, involves the rowing of a longer stroke than *seems* to be rowed in the true Oxford style. Oxford rowing is pre-eminently lively. Anyone who had been at the pains to time the strokes of the Oxford and Cambridge crews during the years 1861-69, would have been able at once to dispose of the notion that Cambridge men row the more rapid stroke. In these nine races, as in the practice preceding them, the Oxford crew often took forty-four strokes per minute. Especially did they rise to this swift stroke in some of those grand spurts which so often carried the dark-blue flag in front. I do not remember that the Cambridge crews ever went beyond forty-two strokes per minute. Then again as to starting early and being quickly spent, a good deal of nonsense was written. In some of the later contests of the series 1861-69, indeed, the Cambridge crews, urged by the thought of numerous past defeats, made unduly exhausting efforts in the earlier part of the race. But nothing was done in this way which would have

caused the loss of the race if the Cambridge crew had really had it in them to win. If the better of two crews puts on rather too much steam at first, they draw so quickly ahead that they soon begin to feel that they have the race in hand, and so proceed to take matters more steadily. In such powerful and well-trained crews as both universities usually send to the contest, very little harm is done by varying the order of the work a little—rowing hard at first and steadily afterwards, or *vice versa*. It is easy for lookers-on, most of whom have never taken part in a boat-race, to theorise on these matters. But those who know what boat-racing is (as distinguished, be it noticed, from most contests of speed) know that the better boat is almost sure to win in whatever way the stroke may set them their work. A good crew, unlike a good horse, requires no jockeying.

The difference of the rivers Cam and Isis has been urged as a sufficient reason for inferiority on the part of the Cambridge crews. That the difference used to tell unfavourably upon the chances of the light-blue flag before the river had been widened and the railway bridge modified, and that even now the Cambridge crews would not be all the better for a better river to practise on, cannot be denied. But I question whether even before the widening of the river, this particular cause sufficed to counterbalance the advantage of the Cantabs in point of numbers. Nor do I think that those who urged the inferiority of the Cambridge river have recognised the principal disadvantage which it entailed upon the light-blue oarsmen.

The first circumstance to be noticed, in this connection, is the difference in the conditions under which racing-boats were and are steered along the two rivers. A Cambridge coxswain has in some respects an easier, in others a more difficult task than the Oxonian. In the first place, he has very little choice as to the course along which he shall take his boat. All he has to do is to steer as closely round each corner as possible; and the narrowness of the river renders it difficult for him to fall into any error in running a straight line from corner to corner. The Oxonian coxswain, on the other hand, requires to be more carefully on the watch lest he should suffer his boat to diverge from the just course, which is far less obvious on the wider Isis than on the Cam. But although the Cambridge coxswain has the shores of the river close to him on either hand, and can thus never be at a loss as to his just course, yet to maintain this obvious course he has to be continually moving the rudder-lines. In fact, there are some 'eights' which 'steer' so ill that it is no easy matter to keep them from the shores when the crew are sending them along at

racing speed. In rounding the three great corners which had to be passed in the ordinary racing-course at Cambridge—viz., First Post Corner, Grassy Corner, and Ditton Corner—the rudder has to be made use of in a much more decided manner than in the straighter course along which the Oxford racing eights have to travel. I have seen the water bubbling over the rudder of a racing eight, as she rounded Grassy Corner, in a manner which showed clearly enough how her ‘way’ must have been checked; yet, probably, if the rudder-lines had been relaxed for a moment, the ill-steering craft would have gone irretrievably out of her course, and been presently stranded on the farther bank. And even eights which steer well had to be very carefully handled along the narrow and winding ditch which we Cantabs used to call ‘the river.’

A more serious disadvantage, so far as the prospects of University Boats were concerned, lay in the circumstance that there was no part of the Cam (within easy reach, at least, of Cambridge) along which the crew could row without a break, for four or five miles, as they had to do in the actual encounter with the Oxford boat. The whole range of the river between the locks next below Cambridge and Bait’s Bite Locks, is somewhat under four miles and a half. But about a mile and a quarter from Bait’s Bite sluice, the railway-bridge crosses the river, and until a few years ago, the supports of this bridge divided the river into three parts. There was in my time a vague tradition that the University Eight had once or twice been steered through the widest of these passages without stopping; but I doubt much whether there could have been any truth in the story. Certainly no coxswain in my time at Cambridge ever achieved the feat, nor could it be safely attempted even by the most skilful steersman. The consequence was that there was a break in the long course which took away all its value as a preparation for the actual race. It may seem to the uninitiated a trifling matter that a crew should get a few seconds of rest in so long a pull. But those who know what racing is, are aware that the slightest break—one stroke even, shirked—is an immense relief to the tugging oarsman.

Beyond Bait’s Bite Locks there is a three-and-a-half-miles course, liable to be broken by the manœuvres of a floating bridge or ferry boat opposite Clayhithe. Next comes another short course extending to Upware. And lastly from Upware to Ely there is a fine five-and-a-half-miles course, considerably wider than the Cam, and presenting several splendid reaches. To this course the Cambridge men used to betake themselves four or five times in the course of their preparation for the great race. But a

course so far removed from the university itself, was clearly far less advantageous than the convenient Oxford long course, extending from the ferry at Christ Church meadows to Newnham. Still, annoying as the want of a convenient long-course must be considered, I cannot attribute the long succession of Cambridge defeats in 1861-69 to such a cause as this. It is true that before the railway-bridge was built, the Cambridge crew used generally to win, and that since it has been so far modified as not to interfere with the passage of a racing eight, they have again been successful, whereas, while the supports of the bridge checked them midway on their course, they were less fortunate. But to connect these circumstances as cause and effect, would be as unsafe as the theory of the Margate fishermen who ascribed the Goodwin Sands to the building of the Reculvers.

It has been said that the shallowness of the Cam affects the style of Cambridge oarsmen. This seems to me a fanciful theory. Occasionally in the course of a race close steering round one or other of the sharper corners might permit the oarsmen to 'feel the bottom,' for two or three strokes; but during all the rest of the course the oars find plenty of water to take good hold of. The Cam was undoubtedly growing shallower for some time after 1860; and the change gave some degree of support to the theory that the peculiarities of the Cambridge style were due to the peculiarities of the Cambridge river. But I believe the notion was a wholly mistaken one; and I am confirmed in this belief by noticing that the Cambridge style in 1860-69 was in all essential respects, and especially in that feature which I shall presently describe as its radical and fatal defect, the same precisely as it had been in earlier times when Cambridge was oftener successful than defeated.

I have heard Cambridge men say, indeed, that after rowing on the Cam they feel quite strange on Thames water. They feel, they say, as if the boat were running away with them. I have experienced the feeling myself, when rowing on the Thames anywhere below Teddington; but most markedly below Kew. It is not due, however, to the mere difference in the depth of the two streams, but mainly, if not wholly, to the circumstance that the lower part of the Thames is a tidal river. It is not noticeable above Teddington, save (in a somewhat modified form) in those portions of the river called 'races,' where the stream runs with unusual rapidity. I should suppose that Oxonians felt the influence of this peculiarity fully as much as Cambridge oarsmen do; in fact, I know that this is the experience of some Oxonians, for they have told me as much.

I believe that the principal disadvantage which the narrowness of the Cam entailed upon boating-men at Cambridge, lay in the circumstance that Cambridge men never had an opportunity of rowing a level race. They had 'bumping races' for the college rights—as the Oxonians had—and time-races to decide between the merits of two or three boats, whereas at Oxford two boats could contend side by side. Thus it was to many Cambridge men a novel and somewhat disturbing experience to find themselves rowing close alongside of their opponents. It may seem fanciful to notice any disadvantage in such a matter as this; yet I believe that the matter was not a trifle. The excitement which men feel just before a race begins, and during the first half-mile or so of its progress, is so intense that a small difference of this sort is apt to produce much more effect than might be expected. I think the somewhat flurried style in which the Cantabs were often observed to row the first half-mile of the great race might be partly ascribed to this cause. Of course, I am far from saying that if a Cambridge crew had been decidedly better than their opponents, the race could have been lost or even endangered from such a cause as this.

And now it remains that I should point out that peculiarity in what may be called the Cambridge style of rowing—though it is not now systematically adopted by Cambridge crews—to which the defeats of the light-blue flag in the years 1861–69 were I believe to be chiefly attributed.

It should be remembered that before we can recognise a peculiarity of style as the cause of a long series of defeats, it must be shown that the peculiarity is neither trifling nor accidental. There are peculiarities in rowing which have a very slight effect upon the speed with which the boat is propelled by the crew. Amongst these may be fairly included such points as the following:—The habit of throwing out the elbows just before feathering, feathering high or low, rowing short or long (a technical expression now commonly, though incorrectly, applied to the length of the stroke, but properly relating to the distance at which the stretcher or foot-board is placed from the seat), sitting high or low, and so on. All these peculiarities—of course within reasonable limits—are unimportant, save in so far as they indicate that the style of the stroke itself is faulty. Then again there are accidental peculiarities, which may be exceedingly important in themselves, but which produce only a transient influence, because they are personal peculiarities of such and such a stroke, and when he has left his university they remain no longer in vogue. As an illustration of this sort of peculiarity, I may notice the remarkably effective stroke rowed by Hall of Magdalen in the year 1858–60. There

the radical defect of the Cambridge style was almost obliterated, and all the good points of that style were fully brought out. The result was that, out of three races rowed with Oxford, Cambridge won two, and though they lost the third, yet they lost it in such a manner as to obtain more credit than any winning race could have brought them. I refer to the memorable race of 1859, in which the Cambridge boat was, at starting, half full of water, and, gradually filling as the race proceeded, sank about half-a-mile from the winning-post, being at the moment of sinking only four lengths behind Oxford, notwithstanding the tremendous difficulties under which the crew had all along been rowing.¹ Mr. Hall also rowed stroke in the great race with the famous London crew—Casamajor, Playford, the two Paynes, &c.—when Cambridge won by half a boat's length. We have, however, to inquire whether there is any point held to be essential by Cambridge oarsmen, which is sufficiently important and sufficiently faulty to account for the marked want of success which attended the light-blue flag in the years 1861–69. The following peculiarity appears to me to be precisely of such a character.

It was formerly held by nearly all the Cambridge oarsmen that 'the instant the oar touches the water' (I am quoting from a pamphlet called '*Principles of Rowing*,' much read by rowing-men at Cambridge) 'the arms and body should begin to fall backwards, the former continuing at their full stretch till the back is perpendicular; they are then bent, the elbows being brought close past the sides,' etc. If a Cambridge oarsman broke this rule so that his arms began to bend before his back was upright, he would be told that he was jerking. 'This is caused,' says our authority, 'by pulling the first part of the stroke with violence, and not falling gradually backwards to finish it. The most muscular men are more than others guilty of it, because they trust too much to their arms, instead of making each part of the body do its proportionate quantity of work. It is most annoying to the rest of the crew, injures the uniform swing throughout the boat, and soon tires out the man himself, however strong he may be, because he is virtually rowing unsupported, and he has nearly the whole weight of the boat on his arms alone.'

I was myself trained to row the Cambridge style, and when I became captain of a boat-club, I was careful to inculcate this style on my crew, and on other crews which came more or less directly

¹ 'Wat Bradwood,' in an article on 'Water Derbies,' afterwards referred to, says that Cambridge was fairly beaten when the boat sank. He might with equal justice have said that they were fairly beaten when they started. They never had a chance of winning from the start, having then half a boat-full, and for some time before they sank a whole boat-full, of water to take along with them.

under my supervision. But I am convinced that the peculiarity so carefully enjoined in past time by the Cambridge club-captains, and still retained, is altogether erroneous for boats of the modern build. I first became aware that the Cambridge style is not the waterman's—and therefore, presumably, not the most effective—through practising in a racing-four with three of our most noted Thames watermen—the two Mackinnys, and Chitty of Richmond. They were then preparing for the Thames National Regatta, though not as a set crew. Accordingly the coxswain would frequently call upon us for a good lifting spurt of a quarter of a mile or so. During these spurts the coxswain was continually telling me that I was not keeping stroke, and I was sensible myself that something was going wrong. One who has taken part in boat-races very soon detects any irregularity in the rowing—by which I do not of course refer to so gross a defect as not keeping time. All the men of a crew may be keeping most perfect time, and may even present the appearance of keeping stroke together, and yet may not be feeling their work simultaneously. I was aware that something was going wrong, but I found it impossible, without abandoning the style of rowing I had been so carefully trained to, to keep stroke with the rest of the crew. It seemed to me that they were doubling over their work, because while I was still swaying backwards they had reached the limit of their swing. Then, they did not seem to me to feather with that lightning flash which the Cambridge style enjoins. Altogether, I left them after three or four long pulls with the impression that, though they might be very effective watermen, they had but a poor style.

Soon after, however, I had occasion to watch Oxford oarsmen at their work, and I found that they row in a style which, without being actually identical with that of the London waterman, resembles it in all essential respects. The moment the oar catches the water, the body is thrown back as in the Cambridge style, but the arms, instead of being kept straight, immediately begin to do their share of the work. The result is that when the body is upright the arms are already bent, and the stroke is finished when the body is very little beyond the perpendicular position.

Now let us compare the two strokes theoretically. In each stroke the body does a share of the work, and in the Cambridge stroke the body even seems to do more work than in the Oxford stroke, since it is swayed farther back. In each stroke, again, the arms do a share of the work, but in the Oxford stroke the work of the arms is distributed equally as a help to that of the body, whereas in the Cambridge stroke the work of the arms is all thrown upon the finish of the stroke. At first sight it seems to

matter very little in what order the work is done, so long as the same amount of work is done in the same space of time. But here an important consideration has to be attended to.

There are two things which the oarsman does in whatever style he rows. He propels the boat along, by pressing the blade of his oar against the water as a fulcrum; but he also propels his oar more or less through the water. If, instead of the actual state of things, the boat were to slide along an oiled groove in some solid substance, whose surface was so ridged that the oar could bear upon the ridges without any flexure, then indeed it would matter very little in what way the oar was pulled, so long as it was pulled through a good range in a short space of time. But the actual state of things being different, we have to inquire whether it is not possible that one style of rowing may serve more than another to make the slip of the oar through the water (a dead loss, be it remarked, so far as the propulsion of the boat is concerned) bear too large a proportion to the actual work done by the rower.

Let us make a simple illustration. Suppose a person standing on the edge of a sheet of water seeks to propel across the sheet a heavy log lying near the bank. If he gives the log a violent kick it will scarcely move at all through the water, but after a few vibrations will be seen to lie a few inches from its former position. The force expended has not been thrown away, however, but has resulted in a violent shock to the kicker. But if instead of kicking the log the person apply the same amount of force gently at first and then with gradually increasing intensity, the log will receive a much more effective impetus, and its motion will continue long after the force has ceased to be exerted. The same amount of force which before produced a motion of a few inches will now project the log several yards.

And now to apply this illustration. If the object of the rower were to move his oar through the water—the boat being supposed for the moment to be a fixture—he could not do better than to adopt the Cambridge style of pulling. For this style gives a steady pressure on the oar at the beginning of the stroke, followed by a gradual increase, and ending by a sharp lift through the water. On the contrary, the Oxford style, in which arms and body apply all their strength at once to the oar, would probably, as in the case of our imaginary *fixed boat*, result in the fracture of the oar. If the boat were not fixed, but very heavy and clumsy, conclusions very different from the above would be arrived at. The Oxford style would be unsuitable to the propulsion of a heavy boat, because, although the oar would have very little slip through the water, yet the boat itself could not be moved in so sudden a

manner as to make the applied force available. On the other hand, the Cambridge style would be very suitable; because, although there would be considerable 'slip,' this would in any case be inevitable, and the force would be applied to the boat (as well as to the oar) in the gradual increasing manner best suited to produce motion through the water. Hence we can understand the long series of victories gained by the light-blue oarsmen in the old-fashioned racing eights. But when we come to consider the case of a boat like the present wager-boat—a boat which answers immediately to the slightest propelling force—we see that that mode of rowing must be the most effective which permits the oar to have the least possible motion *through* the water, which lifts the boat along from the water *as from an almost stable fulcrum*. Hence it is that that sharp grip of the water which is taken by London watermen, and by rowers at Oxford, Eton, Radley, and Westminster, is so much more effective than the heavy drag followed by a rapid and almost jerking finish which marks the Cambridge style.

The mention of public-school rowing leads me to urge another consideration. There are public-school oarsmen at Cambridge, and they hold, as might be supposed, a high position amongst university rowing men. In general they form so small a minority of college racing-men crews, that they have to give up their own workmanlike style, and adopt the style of those they row with. But there is one club—the Third Trinity Club—which consists exclusively of Eton and Westminster men, and although it is a small club, it has been repeatedly at the head of the river, holding its own successfully against clubs which have sent in far heavier and better-trained crews. But even more remarkable is the fact that powerful college crews were sent from Cambridge to Henley between the years 1861-69 *which have actually been unable to maintain their own against Eton lads!* This of itself suffices to show that there was something radically wrong in the style then prevalent at Cambridge; for in such races age, weight, strength, and length of practice were all in favour of the Cambridge crews.

When I first expressed these views about the Oxford and Cambridge style in the 'Daily News' in April 1869, several Oxford and Cambridge men denied that the difference between the two styles was that which I have indicated, asserting that neither Oxford nor Cambridge oarsmen advocated working with the arms in the beginning of the stroke. It was so great a novelty to myself to learn, in 1858, that London watermen row in the manner I have described, and I found the very watermen who rowed in that way so confidently denying that they did so, that I was not

greatly surprised to find many University men, and not a few of the first University oarsmen, persisting that the rules laid down in 'Principles of Rowing' before the modern racing-boats were used are still valid and are still followed at Oxford as well as Cambridge. It was denounced as a special heresy to teach that work should be done by the arms at the beginning of the stroke, instead of the old rule being followed according to which the arms were to remain straight till the body was upright in the backward swing, the work being done entirely by the body and legs up to that moment and then finished by the arms. But before I ventured to enunciate a theory on the subject I had been careful to apply a number of tests not only while watching Oxford and Cambridge eights, but in actual practice. I had inquired diligently also of those who are not merely able to adopt a good rowing style but to analyse it, so as to learn precisely where and how they do their work. In some cases, I found first-rate oarsmen had given very little thought to the matter; but on the question being put to them, they quickly recognised the essential principles on which the most effective and the least tiring style for the modern racing-boat depends. One such oarsman said to me, after giving a few days' trial as well as thought to the matter—'You are quite right; arms, legs, and body must work together from the very beginning; the work is done when the body comes upright; and not only must this be so for the work to be done in the most effective way, but it is essential also if the hands are to be quickly disengaged, the recovery quick, and a good reach forward obtained.'

I found, however, that the essential distinction between a good style in the modern racing eight and a good style in the old-fashioned boats, had been recognised (at least, so far as the modern boats are concerned) a year before my article in the 'Daily News' appeared. In an article on 'Water Derbies,' 'Wat Bradwood,' describing the University race of 1868, draws the following distinctions between the two crews, which precisely accord with my own observations on that occasion; only it is to be noticed that, whereas he is describing the beginning of the race, the whole of which he witnessed from the Umpire's boat, my observations were made from the shore not far from the finish, when Oxford was so far ahead that there was ample time to note separately and closely the style of each boat:—'The styles of progress of the two boats themselves are palpably distinct,' he says; 'Cambridge take a shorter time to come through the air than to row through the water; they go much farther backward than Oxford, and are very slow in getting the hands off the chest; their boat is drawn through the water at each stroke, but has hardly any perceptible

"lift." Oxford, on the other hand, swing just the reverse of Cambridge, a long time in getting forward' (he means, of course, a *relatively longer* time, for no good oarsman would ever take a long time in getting forward), 'and very fast through the water, driving the oars through with a hit like sledge-hammers, while the boat jumps out of the water several inches at each stroke.' These last words again relate rather to contrast between the boats than to the actual lift. The 'drag at the end' in the Cambridge style used always to dip the nose of the eight, whereas the quick disengagement of the hands in the Oxford style prevents any dipping, so that by contrast the Oxford boat seen beside the Cambridge seemed lifted at the end of each stroke. In reality there was very little if any lifting, though the sharp grip of the water at the beginning of the stroke caused the boat to dip a little as compared with her position at the end. Theoretically, the less change of level throughout the stroke (from feather to finish) the better; but if there is any such change, it is far better it should be of the nature of a lift above the floatation-level than of the nature of a dip below that level.

Again, towards the close of the same article 'Wat Bradwood' made the following pertinent remarks respecting the Oxford style in 1868 and generally: 'The general style of Oxford has not deteriorated; though many outsiders fancied that Oxford rowed a short stroke, it was more that the time occupied by them in slashing the oar through the water was short than the reach itself; this deceived inexperienced eyes, especially when compared to the slow 'draw through' (query 'drag') of Cambridge, which often appeared for similar reasons a longer stroke than it really was.' He attributed the defeat of the Cantabs, who were a stronger set of

' This agrees closely with my own description written later, but independently, and flatly contradicted by more than one Oxford oarsman at the time. 'In the case of Oxford,' I said, after describing the lightning feather following the long sweeping stroke of Cambridge, 'we observe a style which at first sight seems less excellent. As soon as the oars are dashed down and catch their first hold of the water, the arms as well as the shoulders of each oarsman are at work. The result is that when the back has reached an upright position, the hands have already reached the chest, and the stroke is finished. Thus the Oxford stroke takes a perceptibly shorter time than the Cambridge stroke, it is also necessarily somewhat shorter in the water. One would therefore say it must be less effective. Especially would an unpractised observer form this opinion, because the Oxford stroke seems to be much shorter in range than it is in reality. *There we have the secret of its efficiency*. It is actually as long as the Cambridge stroke, but is taken in a perceptibly shorter time. What does this mean but that the oar is taken more sharply, and therefore much more effectively, through the water? Much more effectively,' I proceeded, 'so far as the actual conditions of the contest are concerned,' going on to consider the difference between the modern and the old-fashioned racing-boats.—*Light Science for Leisure Hours* : Essay on Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Styles.

men than the Oxonians, to the teaching of their 'coach,' who had been (though this he does not mention) as good a 'coach' as ever existed for rowing in the old-fashioned style of boats, but whose 'experience availed nothing to teach the modern style of light-boat rowing.'

In another article by the same writer, in the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' (1868), a noteworthy illustration is given of the value of a good style. 'Among the college boats in the first division at Cambridge this year, the strongest were perhaps First Trinity, Trinity Hall, and notably Emmanuel; the weakest in the division was the Lady Margaret crew,' -the crew representing St. John's College. 'But notwithstanding this, Lady Margaret went up one place, and pressed Trinity very hotly. There must, of course, be some special reason to account for eight weak men proving superior to eight strong ones.' There is a little (unintentional) exaggeration here: the stroke of the Lady Margaret crew was as strong as well as an elegant oarsman, and two others of the crew could certainly not be called weak; nevertheless the crew as a whole was undoubtedly weak compared with most of the other crews of the first division. 'That reason,' proceeds our author, 'is to be found in *style*. Every day of practice on the Cam you hear the "coaches" of the different racing-boats giving their crews certain directions, some absurd, and nearly all, from some accidental reason, useless. The chief of these is to "keep it long," and if you object to the results of this teaching, you are told that "length" is the great requisite of good rowing, and that "Oxford, sir, always beat us, because they are longer than we are." Now, this is true and yet untrue. At Cambridge "length" is acquired by making the men "finish the stroke," that is, by making them "swing well back" beyond the perpendicular. Of course the oar remains longer in the water, but we maintain that the extra time it is kept there by the backward motion of the body is time lost. The "swinging back" throws a tremendous strain on the abdominal muscles, the weakest rowing muscles in the body; very soon the men feel this strain, become exhausted, and unable to "get forward," and finally lose time and swing and "go all to pieces." Length obtained by going backwards is of no possible use. A crew ought to be "coached" to get as far *forward* as they can, to finish the stroke by bringing their elbows past their sides, and their hands well into their bodies, and then complaints about "wind" and "last" will be fewer. This was abundantly proved in the late May races. First Trinity, it is true, kept "head," but only because of their great strength, and because they had a stroke who understood the duties of his position. Before the races every

sporting newspaper, every supposed judge of rowing in the University, was certain about only one thing, and that was that Lady Margaret must go down; the only question was where they would stop. They, however, not only kept away from Trinity Hall, but finished above Emmanuel and Third Trinity, infinitely stronger' (which no doubt must be understood as meaning 'far stronger') 'boats. The reason was that they were the only boat on the river which rowed in anything like a good style. They had the reach forward, the quick recovery, and the equally quick disengagement of the hands which marked the Oxford crew of 1868. Consequently, although a very weak lot of men, they were able to vindicate style against strength. We hope' (added Wat Bradwood) 'that Cambridge generally will appreciate the lesson; it is one that has not been taught them for years, and results on their own river ought to show its value.' Less than a year after this was written, the Cambridge boat, with Goldie, the Lady Margaret stroke, at the aft thwart, were just beaten by Oxford in one of the best races ever rowed, and the year after, with the same stroke, they won for the first time in ten years. The subsequent successes of the Jesus boat on the Cam afforded further illustrations of the superiority of style over strength. For the Jesus boat has remained for years at the head of the river, though the crew as a whole has often been far surpassed in strength by the crews of Trinity, John's, and other colleges.

There is, as the writer from whom I have quoted above correctly says, 'no opposition between theory and practice in this matter, any more than there is in metaphysics or moral philosophy.' The ill-success of Cambridge in past years was in the main due to a want of appreciation of theory, and the absence of due recognition of the entire change which the introduction of the light outriggered racing-boat had produced in the art of effective rowing. The Cambridge 'finish to the stroke,' the 'lug at the end,' as sailors call it, was excellent with the old-fashioned boats. It was indeed essential to success in a race, as was the lightning feather. But now the essential conditions are a sharp grasp of the water at the beginning of the stroke, the intensest possible action then and throughout the time the oar is in the water, so that the oar may be as short a time as possible in the water, but *in the time* may have the largest possible range. This result must not merely be obtained from each individual member of the crew, but from all together in precisely the same time. It is necessary that the stroke should mark the time in the most distinct and emphatic manner. In the Cambridge style, or what at least used so to be called, perfect time, though of course always desirable, was not so

absolutely essential as in the Oxford style. The oars being a long time in the water, it mattered less if any oarsman was for a small fraction of a second behind or in advance of his fellows. But with the sharp dash upon the water and the quick tear through the water of the better style, perfect simultaneity is all-important. The stroke must not only have first a good style himself, and secondly a keen sense of time, but he must have that power of making his crew know and feel what he is doing, and what he wants them to do, which constitutes the essential distinction between the merely steady stroke and such a stroke as every man of the crew feels to be made for the place. When one of these 'born strokes' occupies the aft thwart, there is no occasion for the coxswain to tell the crew when to quicken or when to row steadily at their hardest; for the whole crew knows and feels the purpose of the stroke as distinctly as he knows and feels it himself.

[Since the above was written I have seen both the crews for the present year's race at work. It is too early to venture a prediction as to the result of the race, though the odds offered on Cambridge would seem to imply that nothing short of an accident can save Oxford from a crushing defeat. It is manifest that Cambridge has the stronger crew, and the style of the Oxford crew at present is not such as to indicate that this year the Oxford style will defeat superior strength. In fact, at present, Oxford shows defects which have been wont to characterise Cambridge crews, and which unmistakably do characterise the present Cambridge crew, fine though it undoubtedly is. But if, as has before now happened, the Oxford crew fall into the true Oxford style during the fortnight before the race, the odds will not be 2 to 1 as at present, nor even 3 to 2, on Cambridge.]

Captain Cole's Passenger.

BY JAMES PAYN.

EVERYONE who uses the great steam ferry between Liverpool and New York knows Captain Cole of the Cunard line. I don't say anything about his seamanship, because I know nothing about it; but he is said to be the very best of the commanders of that company, which boasts of never having lost a ship—nor a passenger—during the many years it has ploughed the Atlantic. My own acquaintance with him has been solely on shore; because when at sea I am never in a condition to make acquaintance with anybody. There are some folks that tell you that sea-sickness 'goes off' after a certain number of days. I can only say that I should like to know the number. It has never 'gone off' with me during even the longest voyage between this country and the United States or *vice versa*. Perhaps it would 'go off' if I extended my travels to South America, but my impression is that I should go off first. Nature herself seems to have set bounds, in my case, to the wish to range. If I had been born on the Continent, I might have been a great traveller; but being insular, no desire for foreign travel ever stirs within me. My bark is on the shore, and never goes beyond it, if I can help it. I can sit on a pier (if it is not one of those chain piers which swing), and watch the ripple of the wave with much satisfaction; but not all the blandishments of all the boatmen in Great Britain would induce me to embark upon it for pleasure.

Of all poems, Byron's 'Address to the Ocean' is my favourite, because (under pretence of friendship) he shows what a monster it is. 'The wrecks are all thy deed'—a strongish expression to use, at a time when French ships of battle were sunk by scores by the English guns, but I like him all the better for it. 'A thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain,' which, though not quite a correct statement, is eminently true as regards sea-sickness. You may try any number of vessels, and all kinds of them, but to that complexion (of sea-green, with black about the eyes) you come at last, with which you started.

I hate the sea. For certain reasons, however, I am compelled periodically to cross the Atlantic, and on the first occasion I had a letter of introduction to good Captain Cole. We shook hands; the

screw began to move, and I rushed to my cabin, where I remained throughout the voyage. I believe he came to see me very often in my misery. 'Visiting the sick' at sea is a much more unpleasant thing than on shore, remember, but I didn't know and I didn't care. I saw him to know him again—at New York; and in short, though on board his ship he might have been its rudder, for all I saw of him, we met on shore both in the New and Old World pretty frequently. He knew Charles Dickens, and, being himself a genial fellow, was personally much attached to him, but he could never forgive him what he has written of the dangers (from fire) of a steamer's chimney at sea. It was the only part of the great novelist's writings that seemed to have come under his notice (indeed, the gallant captain never read anything but his own log and the points of the compass), and this caused him to form an unfavourable view of him as an author. 'No, sir,' he would say, when I would endeavour to combat this idea; 'he was a great man, a noble, generous, fine-hearted creature, but as a writer he was nowhere—like what you are,' he would say, with a wink of the eye and a roll of his head, 'when you're aboard ship.' In spite of which disagreement of literary opinion, the Captain and I grew to be fast friends.

He entertained a colossal contempt for the land and all belonging to it (except his fellow-creatures) which amused me vastly; but especially for its modes of locomotion. Cabs, coaches, and omnibuses were all in his eyes senseless and dangerous; and as to getting astride a horse, I don't believe any sum would have induced him to attempt it. He had a certain respect, however, for an express train, or rather for the engine of it, which, flying through storm and sleet from starting-point to terminus, reminded him perhaps of his own gallant ship.

As we had hardly a thought or a topic in common, it was natural that our social intercourse took a narrative shape. I told him stories (which, as he had never read anything, had the merit of novelty), and he reciprocated with yarns. I was foolish enough at first to suggest a channel for his recollections—shipwrecks, of the records of which, as a thoroughgoing landsman, I was naturally fond. 'Sir,' he said, drawing himself up, and getting very red in the face, 'you forget that you are talking to a captain of a Cunarder. What the—[here he inserted a sea-term] do *we* know about shipwrecks? However,' he added, more benignly, 'there was one occasion when I confess I thought the spell of our Company's good fortune was about to be broken, and that I should be the critter to do it.'

'It was six years ago or so, and in the summer time, that the

ship was making her voyage out, and a very good voyage. The whole way the sea had been like a duck-pond.'

Here I shook my head incredulously. I had seen the Atlantic in the condition referred to—and felt it.

'Well, I should not perhaps have said "the whole way,"' he admitted, with a smile, 'for when we were about 100 miles from land we met with a breeze of wind.'

The Captain always talked of 'a breeze of wind' just as some shore folks talk (though with less tautology, for sherry is not always wine) of 'a glass of sherry wine.'

'I remember the breeze, because we picked up a little sailing boat with only one man in her, very short of provisions, who had been blown out to sea, and whom we took on board. About half an hour after that incident I was informed that one of the passengers wished to speak with me in private upon a very important matter. Accordingly he came to me in my cabin, a little thin wizened man looking like a tailor, whom I had hardly noticed as being on board; indeed, he was insignificant enough in every way save for the expression of his face, which certainly exhibited the most intense anxiety and distress of mind. Of course I thought he had been drinking, and in fact was on the verge of "the jumps," which is what the Yankees term *delirium tremens*.

"Well, my man, what is it?" said I severely; "we shall soon sight land: I have no time to throw away."

"That is very true, Captain," he answered, in a thin quavering voice, and with a strong American accent, "but your time will be even shorter than you imagine unless you listen to what I have got to say to you. You will never see land, and much more make it, if you are not prepared to act at once on the information I am about to give you. Neglect it, and your ship will be at the bottom of the sea in"—he looked at his watch—"yes, in exactly an hour and a half."

"All right, my man," said I, "you may go. I'll send the ship's doctor to look at you;" for of course I thought he was wandering in his wits.

Then what had seemed like anxiety in his face became mortal fear—genuine abject terror such as no actor could have imitated. He threw himself upon his knees, and, clasping his hands together, besought me not to treat his words with incredulity.

"Then why, sir," I replied, "do you talk such damned nonsense about my ship?"

"Because it's true, Captain," he groaned. "There's dynamite on board, and clockwork machinery connected with it. As I am a living man, if the thing is not at once looked to, the ship and all on

board of her will be blown to atoms within the time I have mentioned."

"At this I confess I felt a cold shudder down the nape of my neck, for not three months before the very catastrophe at which he hinted had taken place at (I think) Bremerhaven, and had struck terror into all ships' captains like myself. Some infamous villain had insured a steamer very heavily, and had taken means for its destruction on its voyage in this very manner, only the infernal machine had burst on the quay, killing scores of people, and its inventor with it.

"Good heavens, man! tell me all," I cried, "and quickly."

"Nay, but I daren't, and I can't," he pleaded, "unless I have your solemn promise that you will never betray me. I know that you are a man of your word, and that will suffice for me. You must promise, whatever may happen, never to allude to the conversation that we are now having, or to make use of it in any way to the disadvantage of myself or others."

"Well," said I, "I promise. Now, where is this cursed dynamite?"

"One moment, Captain. There is still time and to spare, now, since you have listened to reason, and I must prove to you that, though I once hearkened to the whisper of the devil, I repented, and would have undone the mischief if I could. This ship is insured in London—never mind where and how—for a huge sum, and I have been employed to sink her. I brought the machinery, set to this very day (for you have made the voyage quicker than was thought possible), down to Liverpool, in a small portmanteau which was sent on board the night before she sailed. It was a stipulation that I should sail with you to see that nothing interfered with the execution of the plan. But I swear to you, no sooner did I touch the deck than I repented. I wanted the package placed in my own cabin—ask your own men if it was not so—in order that I might have some opportunity of getting it thrown overboard in the course of the voyage. They had already, however, put it below—where, indeed, it was intended to go—with the other baggage. It's a small portmanteau of bullock's-hide, and they might as well have let me have it in my cabin."

"The dread had passed away from the man's voice directly I had given my promise that no harm should happen to him. He had doubtless every confidence in the clockwork machinery, but that of course was not my case.

"Come up on deck, you scoundrel," cried I, "and identify this infernal thing."

"I set twenty men to work at once to bring up the luggage on

the deck, which, since we had not yet even sighted land, astonished them not a little.

"Quick, quick, my good fellows; there will be extra grog for you," I said, "if you turn the things out within the hour."

The passengers who had not been across the water before, thought it a natural thing enough perhaps, but my officers imagined I had gone demented. There I stood with this Yankee tailor (as he looked like) by my side, who, though he affected to be quite unconcerned, kept a sharp eye on everything that came up, and was to let me know by a nod when we got to the dratted thing. The luggage of a Cunarder is no joke in point of quantity, but in quality it varies more perhaps than any similar collection to be found anywhere else. There were arks belonging to fine ladies, large enough to go to sea in; chests that contained clothes and tools of emigrants, dapper portmanteaus of gentlemen touring for pleasure; bags of carpet-baggers that had no other luggage nor property on earth; hampers full of English fare to astound the natives of new York; and photograph cases smelling of nasty stuff for twenty feet round 'em.

I won golden opinions from the ladies, through my being so very particular, and calling out "Gently, gently; handle 'em smart, my men, but be careful not to shake 'em," which of course was put down to my carefulness of their precious possessions, whereas I was thinking of the dangers of dynamite, which explodes, you know, by concussion. That blessed portmanteau, as it happened, was at the very bottom of all—a mangy, ill-looking thing enough, and, though small, as heavy as lead. "Now, just throw that overboard, my fine fellows," said I, "will you, and be careful not to knock it against the bulwarks."

Nobody, of course, questions the orders of a ship's captain when at sea—and over it went with a splash; but I saw the first mate look at the second with an expression that conveyed "he's mad," as clearly as if he had given words to it. It was this circumstance, combined with the sense of complete security from the awful peril that had threatened us, that for the first time put it into my mind that I had been made the victim of a hoax. If it had been so, I verily believe I should have thrown the little tailor after his portmanteau; but when I called to mind the face of the fellow when he first came into my cabin, I could not quite believe that. However, I took an opportunity of speaking to him once more alone. "Look here," said I, "you unmitigated thief and villain; there's one point in your story that wants clearing up. Your life is not very valuable, it is true, but I dare say you yourself put a fancy price upon it, and, that being so, how could you take personal

charge of a machine that, according to your own account, was to blow us all to splinters?—how comes it, I mean, that you were on board with it, yourself?”

“Well, Captain,” he replied, “you see, I’m a poor man, and the money was a good round sum; and, as I told you, my employer insisted on my seeing the thing was going right with my own eyes; there was a risk, of course, but the fact is, arrangements had been made for meeting me in this very latitude. The man in the boat, whom we took on board, was on the look-out for me, and it was agreed should take me off the ship.”

“What! did *he* know about the dynamite, too?” I broke out; “is it possible that there was a third villain, beside you and your employer?”

“Well, yes, Captain, I’m afraid there was; but you can’t touch him, you know, without touching me, and you have passed your word that I shall not be harmed. Besides, you must remember that I might have got off and clean away, leaving you all to bust up, if it had not been for the extreme delicacy of my conscience.”

There was a sly smile about the fellow’s mouth for which I could have wrung his neck, but for the safe-conduct I had given him; his whole manner, as well as the expression of his face, had changed, now he had got his way; and instead of a villain who had repented of a great crime, he looked more like a successful schemer.

“However, the dynamite was overboard, thank heaven; we were nearing land, and I had other things to think about.

“When we were still some way from harbour we were met by a police boat, the chief officer of which demanded to be taken on board, to speak with me.

“Hullo!” I said, when we were in the cabin together; “no extradition business, I hope? There is no murdering Englishman among my passengers, is there?”

“Well, no,” he answered; “but I’ve reason to believe there’s a citizen of the United States who would neither stick at murder nor anything else.”

“Then I thought of the dynamite, of course, and rejoiced that the villain had been discovered without any betrayal of his secret on my part.

“You have a warrant for his apprehension, I conclude?”

“Well, no, Captain, that’s just my difficulty, for I don’t know which man it is; but I’ve an order to search the luggage. Information has come by wire that a whole plant for forging American banknotes is being imported by your ship; it will not be down below, of course, but in the man’s personal luggage in his *cabin*.”

‘I smelt a rat at once, and I dare say looked pretty blank and bamboozled.

“No one has left the ship since you started, has he?” inquired the officer anxiously; “there has been a small boat hanging off and on the harbour, and we have reason to believe that this man’s confederate may have had a hint by telegram——”

“No, no,” interrupted I, “everybody is on board that sailed with us;” and I might have added “and one more,” but I thought he might just as well find that out for himself. I didn’t want more people than was necessary to know that I had been made such a fool of.

“According to my instructions,” continued the officer, “the plant is contained in a portmanteau of bullock’s-hide, with brass nails round the rim, and therefore easily recognisable.”

I nodded, for indeed I myself recognised the thing from his description very readily. Had I not told them to be very careful with it, and not to knock it against the bulwarks, and seen it dropped overboard with my own eyes?—thus making myself an accomplice in his escape from justice of a Yankee forger!

‘Of course the officer didn’t find that portmanteau among the “personal luggage,” though I am bound to say he looked for it very carefully, and scandalised some of my saloon passengers not a little by his unwelcome attentions; nor was it among the larger articles, though they all lay exposed on the deck, as if for his especial behoof and convenience. His impression was, he said, that his “information,” as he called it, had been incorrect, and that that bullock-hide portmanteau must be coming over in the next ship; which I said was possible—because everything is possible, you know—though, I own, I did not think it very probable.

‘As to the owner of the article in question, he kept out of my way, and slipped out of the ship on the first opportunity. His story was so far true that he had intended to keep the thing in his cabin to be got quietly on shore, only the steward had objected and caused it to be taken below. That information had been telegraphed from England to the New York police was known to his confederate, who had come out to warn him, and they would no doubt have saved me all trouble by dropping the portmanteau overboard themselves, only it was among the other luggage. How to get it out and dispose of it without discovery was the problem they had to solve; which they accomplished by means of the dynamite story. I don’t know which of them made it up, or whether they composed it together, like those two Frenchmen you were speaking to me about the other day’ [I think the Captain’s reference was to MM. Erckmann-Chatrian], ‘but I must say it was a devilish good story, and that’s why I’ve told it to you.’

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

IX. TORQUATO TASSO.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

A CURVING line of deep blue waters, fringed with mild white foam, softly laves the foot of the cliffs on which Sorrento sits and smiles dreamily amid her orange groves in the dreamy, orange-scented air. Yonder, across the liquid plain, rises Capri. On the opposite side of the bay a tuft of vapour, white and soft as a plume, waves above Vesuvius' awful crest. The mountains behind Sorrento are furrowed with deep narrow gorges, down which many a torrent plunges toward the sea, overshadowed by luxuriant bowers of foliage, and sometimes murmuring a deep *bourdon* to the sound of voices chanting the litany of the Madonna in a wayside chapel, or the sharp jangle of bells that call to worship from some crumbling tower. Sails, white, brown, or red as autumn leaves, are wafted over the wonderful turquoise-tinted Mediterranean that quivers under the sunlight with that exquisite *tremolar della marina* which greeted Dante's eyes when he issued from the *aura morta*--the dark, dead atmosphere of eternal gloom. Half-naked fishermen stretch their brown sun-baked limbs on the brown sun-baked shore. Soft island shapes swim on the sea-horizon veiled in silver haze, and, over all, the sky of Southern Italy spreads an intense delight, an ecstasy of blue!

Sky, sea, islands, silvery vapour, shadowy gorge, and groves of burnished greenery studded with golden globes, are not different at this day from what they were when Tasso's eyes first opened on them more than three centuries ago. Nature here, like some Southern Circe, daughter of the Sun-god and a nymph of Ocean, smiles in eternal youth, and steals away the hearts of all men who behold her.

That sparkling sea, that crystal sky, those evergreen gardens, with their background of mountains, were familiar to the eyes of Torquato Tasso in his earliest years. He was born in Sorrento on the 11th day of March 1544, a season when, in that southern, sheltered spot, the tepid air is full of perfume and all the sweetness of the spring. Torquato's father was himself a poet of no mean fame--Bernardo Tasso, author amongst other things of a poem in one hundred cantos on the subject of Amadis of Gaul, which is his best known work. Bernardo Tasso belonged to an ancient

and noble family of Bergamo, where he himself was born ; his wife, Porzia de' Rossi, was a Neapolitan of Pistojesse lineage.

The instances are innumerable of the transplantation of Italian families from one part of the peninsula to another. From Dante to Guarini, the history of an Italian man of letters almost invariably includes a series of migrations from city to city and from court to court. And in that word 'court' lies the explanation of most of the migrations. The numerous Italian potentates and princes, big and little (many of them very little, if their magnitude be measured by the size of the territory they ruled over !), vied with each other in 'patronising' the Muses. And in order to do so efficaciously, it was, of course, necessary to bestow some patronage on the poets and artists whom the Muses deigned to inspire ; those goddesses being, indeed, unpatronisable except by deputy ! One may serve Calliope or Polyhymnia in one's own person, but one cannot patronise them save in somebody else's ! This being so, poets, philosophers, painters, sculptors, and such-like folks, were in great request amongst sovereign rulers, and wandered from court to court throughout the length and breadth of Italy, from Turin to Salerno, from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic shores. It is strange and somewhat sad to observe that the result of all this sovereign patronage, however agreeable and flattering it may have been to the Immortal Nine, was in nearly every case to embitter and oppress the souls of the patronised—Dante's fiery pride, Petrarch's lofty sweetness, Tasso's romantic enthusiasm, Guarini's worldly culture—none of these so widely different qualities of these so widely different men availed to mitigate the sorrows, disillusion, and mortifications to which the favour and familiarity of the great exposed them one and all. An irritable genus, these poets, truly ! And we may believe that the sovereign patrons had their trials, too, of a serio-comic and not intolerable kind.

But neither for young Torquato nor for his parents had the inevitable time of sorrow and persecution arrived when he was staring with calm baby eyes at the blue gulf of Sorrento, or conning his first lessons at his mother's knee upon the shores of exquisite Parthenope. He lived the first years of his life in Naples, amidst all the luxuriant images of natural beauty which abound there, and which, it cannot be doubted, made an ineffaceable impression on his tender mind. There is something pathetic as well as a little ludicrous in reading, on the authority of a grave and learned biographer, that at *three years old* Torquato was so passionately fond of study that he would willingly have passed his whole day in school had he been let to do so. He had a tutor, one Don Giovanni d'Angeluzzo, to whose care Bernardo confided him during

an absence of the latter from Italy, and this tutor wrote to the absent father wondrous accounts of the child's genius and thirst for learning ! Luckily for Torquato, he had a loving mother to prevent him from becoming an odious little prodigy of a pedant, and to keep the bloom of childhood from being quite rubbed off her tender little blossom by the zealous masculine manipulation of the learned Don Giovanni. How beloved this loving mother was by her boy, and how fondly and fervently he kept her memory in his heart, is proved by the following touching lines written years afterwards to record his final parting with her, which took place when he was not yet ten years old :—

Me dal sen della madre empia fortuna
 Pargoletto divelse. Ah di que' baci,
 Oh'ella bagnò di lagrime dolenti,
 Con sospir mi rimembra, e degli ardenti
 Pregghi che sen portar l'aure fugaci,
 Che io non dovea giunger più volto a volto
 Fra quelle braccia accolto
 Con nodi così stretti e sì tenaci.
 Lasso ! i' seguii con mal sicure piante,
 Qual Ascanio o Camilla, il padre errante.

Which may be faithfully, if roughly, translated as follows :—

Me from my mother's breast, a little child,
 Harsh fortune tore. Ah, of her kisses bathed
 In tears of sorrow, oft with sighs I dream,
 And of her ardent prayers, dispersed in air ;
 For nevermore, ah ! never, face to face
 Within those arms was I to be enfolded
 In an embrace so clinging and so close.
 Alas ! With childish footsteps insecure
 I followed, like Ascanius or Camilla,
 My wandering sire.

Yes, those years of happy study in the light of mother's eyes, and the warmth of mother's fond embraces, came to an untimely end. Little Torquato was really, it should seem, a wonderfully precocious child, even when a due grain of salt is added to the statements on that head of his preceptors. He was sent before he had completed his fourth year to a school kept by certain Jesuit Fathers, who had then but newly, and with cautious modesty, set up a little church and schools in a somewhat obscure street of Naples, called *Via del Gigante*.¹ The Tassos then were inhabiting

¹ The above dates are given on the authority of Manso, a contemporary and friend of the poet ; but Tiraboschi (*Lett. It.*, vol. vii. book 3) observes that it is certainly ascertained that the Jesuits were not introduced into Naples before A.D. 1552, and that consequently Tasso must have been at least seven years old when he began to frequent their schools : a much more credible statement than Manso's.

the Palazzo de' Gambacorti (an ancestral inheritance), and from the palace to the schools, the future singer of 'Jerusalem Delivered' trotted daily in quest of knowledge. It is related that such was the child's passionate thirst for learning, that he often rose before daylight, impatient to be gone to his teachers; and that on more than one occasion his mother was constrained to send servants with lighted torches to accompany him through the still dark and silent city. The Jesuits were proud of their marvellous young pupil. With their accustomed acuteness of judgment, they doubtless perceived that here was a genius of no common sort; and it is possible that some among them may have looked forward to enlisting the fiery soul of Torquato under the banner of the militant company of Jesus. His confessor—the confessor of an infant of eight years old!—considered his intelligence and his behaviour sufficiently mature and serious to warrant his receiving the sacrament of the Holy Communion at that tender age. At seven he had 'perfectly learned the Latin tongue, and was well advanced in Greek,' and had composed and publicly recited orations in prose and several poems.

But now, as I have said, these pleasant days of study and love at home, and praise abroad, were to end for little Torquato, and in this way: His father, Bernardo, was the secretary, and friend, and faithful adherent of Ferrante Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno. Now, Don Pedro di Toledo, Viceroy of the Emperor Charles V. in Naples, desired to introduce into that city the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, *all' uso di Spagna*, 'after the custom of Spain,' as one of his biographers says, and the city of Naples ungratefully opposed the bestowal of this blessing with might and main. So strong was the feeling of the Neapolitans in the matter, that they sent the Prince of Salerno to the Emperor as their ambassador, to plead with his Majesty against the pious project of Toledo. Bernardo Tasso accompanied the prince his master on this embassy, which took place in the year 1547. It was successful; and the prince, on his return to Naples, was received with the utmost enthusiasm by his fellow-citizens, and with scarcely concealed hatred and spite by Toledo, who could not forgive him for having balked his design. But Prince Ferrante's triumph was short-lived. Toledo filled the mind of Charles V. with suspicions and prejudices against his powerful subject; and possibly not the least efficacious of the viceroy's arguments was the possibility held out to Charles of reclaiming for the imperial crown the customs dues of Salerno, which had hitherto enriched the prince's revenue. We are not now concerned to follow the windings of this story of court treachery and tyranny, *all' uso di Spagna*; for

our present purpose it suffices to say that the Prince of Salerno was driven from his country, and that Bernardo Tasso followed his master's fallen fortunes into France. On leaving Naples, where he left his wife, he took with him Torquato, who, incredible as it seems, is stated on grave authority to have been involved, child as he was, in the odium with which Toledo and his party covered the Prince of Salerno and his adherents. In the year 1552 the said prince and all who had followed him were publicly declared to be rebels, and the sentence included Bernardo and Torquato Tasso.

The scene now changes for our young poet. His father carried him to Rome, and there left him under the charge of one Maurizio Cattaneo, whilst he, Bernardo, accompanied the Prince of Salerno to France. Cattaneo was a gentleman of Bergamo, long settled in Rome, where he enjoyed considerable favour at the Papal court, and especially from the Cardinal Albani, whose secretary he was during many years. He was bound to the Tassos not only by ties of friendship but of some distant kindred, and he seems to have fulfilled his charge towards the boy with almost paternal affection. Torquato loved and honoured his memory all his life, and has dedicated one of his dialogues to him, giving it the name of 'Cattaneo.' Under this good man's care Torquato remained until he had completed his twelfth year. Meanwhile his only sister, Cornelia, who had remained with her mother at Naples, was married to a noble gentleman of Sorrento named Marzio Sersale; and very shortly after the marriage, her mother died. Bernardo felt his wife's loss deeply. They had been a very affectionate and faithful couple, and Bernardo's grief was of course aggravated by his having been absent from Porzia in her last moments. In his sorrow and loneliness he resolved to send for Torquato to rejoin him. It must be explained that Bernardo Tasso, after his patron's final ruin, had returned from France to Italy, and taken refuge at the court of Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, who had invited him and received him very honourably. So, after some four years passed in the Eternal City, which years were chiefly spent in assiduous study, Torquato took leave of his kind preceptor, Maurizio Cattaneo, and departed for Mantua.

Among the most indelible impressions left on our poet by his stay in Rome appears to have been that of a certain courtly and almost chivalrous tone of manners which is said to have distinguished Maurizio Cattaneo. The latter seems, too, to have concerned himself with the physical, as well as moral and mental, education of his pupil. Torquato was an adept in most of the knightly exercises of the day. When he rejoined his father at

Mantua, he was tall for his years, handsome, and strong; and a prodigy of education according to the standard of the times, having fully completed a course of the Greek and Latin languages, rhetoric, poetry, and logic. His father was, very naturally, filled with joy and pride at the boy's attainments, and although he had sent for him with the intention of keeping him as a companion in his widowed life, yet he shortly sent him to the University of Padua, there to pursue the study of the law, in company with Scipio Gonzaga (afterwards Cardinal), a kinsman of the reigning Duke of Mantua, and within a year or two of Torquato's own age. The two lads fell into a great friendship, lived during their student days in the closest intimacy, and preserved their mutual attachment through life. There, in the stately and learned city, Tasso passed five years of his existence, still so brief, but already chequered with many vicissitudes. Stately, sleepy old Padua, as it is now!—with its great silent spaces which the sunshine reigns over victoriously; its narrower streets full of welcome shade in the spring and summer and autumn days; its wide picturesque piazza all ablaze on market-days with fruits and flowers, amongst which the vivid yellow flowers of the pumpkin burn like flames; its glimpses of red oleander blossoms and polished dark green foliage peeping over garden walls; its wide, silent, dreamy churches, and its haunting memories of a splendid past!

Padua was still splendid in the middle of the sixteenth century, when Torquato Tasso, and Scipio Gonzaga, and many another youth illustrious by birth or genius, paced its academic halls. Here Torquato, not yet turned seventeen, passed a public examination in canon and civil law, philosophy, and theology, 'with universal eulogy and astonishment of that learned university,' as a contemporary writer quaintly declares. But in the following year, when Torquato was but eighteen, the eulogy and astonishment were still further intensified by the publication of the heroic poem called 'Rinaldo.' It was, indeed, a marvellous production for a youth of his age, and, in the words of his friend and biographer Manso, a brilliant dawn which presaged the rising of that full sun of genius to be displayed later in the epic of 'Jerusalem Delivered.' The poem was dedicated to the Cardinal Luigi d'Este brother of the reigning Duke Alfonso II., and published under the auspices of his Eminence. This was the first link in the chain which bound Tasso to the princely house of Este, to their glory and his sorrow as it proved. Bernardo, although naturally proud of his son's genius, seems to have looked with some discontent upon the lad's devotion to poetry. He himself was a poet, and the Muse had not bettered his fortunes; and he had thought to

give young Torquato a career which opened up a prospect of worldly success, riches, and a solid position—namely, the profession of the law. But let the good Bernardo rough-hew his ends as carefully as he might, the divinity called poetry shaped them far otherwise than he intended. It is an old story. Boccaccio and Petrarch furnished examples of the imperious and irresistible force of inborn genius to break through any bonds of calculating prudence. And long before their time the Roman Ovid sang, undergoing the same struggle against parental authority:

Nec me verbosas leges ediscere, nec me
Ingrato vocem prostituuisse foro,
Mortale est quod quæris opus; mihi fama perennis
Quæritur ut toto semper in orbe canar.

Tasso, like Ovid, chose 'undying fame' rather than the weary but profitable labour of studying 'verbose laws.' The one languished in a horrible exile, the other was imprisoned as a maniac. Rarely does the implacable divinity confer her sovereign favours save in exchange for the very life-blood of her votaries; but perhaps even among the tragic annals of poets there is no record more steeped in sadness than that of the life of Torquato Tasso.

As yet, however, he is surrounded by the rosy light of the *lucente aurora*; youth and hope animate his breast, praise is meted to him in no stinted measure, friendship holds his hand in a firm, cordial grasp, and the clouds that are to darken the meridian and the evening of his days cast no shade upon the brightness of the morning.

So great was the reputation of the 'Rinaldo' that the University of Bologna invited the youthful poet to visit that city, conveying the flattering request through Pier Donato Cesi, then vice-legate, and afterwards legate at Bologna, and Cardinal. Torquato went to Bologna and there pursued his studies, and even read and disputed publicly in the schools on various subjects, and especially on poetry. He is said to have been recalled thence at the instance of Scipio Gonzaga, at that time head of the Academy of the 'Etherials' of Padua—one of the numberless institutions of the kind which sprang up in Italy in the sixteenth century. Scipio is said to have been jealous of Bologna's having possession of the rising genius instead of Padua; and moreover to have desired Tasso's return to the latter place from motives of personal attachment to him. Certain it is that Tasso did return to Padua, where he was received with great honour by the 'Etherials,' amongst whom he assumed the name of 'Pentito,' or 'The repenting one.' This singular choice of an appellation is explained by Manso to

mean that Tasso repented the time he had spent in the study of law. But Tiraboschi reveals a bit of secret history which Manso either did not know or chose to suppress, and which shows that vexations and mortifications were not spared to the young poet even in these early days of his fame. Tiraboschi possessed a long letter written by Tasso to the vice-legate Cesi, above-mentioned, from which it appears that the poet during his stay in Bologna was accused of being the author of certain libellous verses, and that his dwelling was consequently searched by the *birri* (officers of the law, in such evil repute that their title is a term of reproach in Italy to this day), and his books and papers carried off, and that this was the true cause of his quitting Bologna. Tasso indignantly defends himself against the charge, and complains with much spirit to the legate of the injurious treatment he suffered. 'Why,' says he among other things, 'were the *birri* sent to my rooms on a slight and unreasonable suspicion, my companions insulted, my books taken away? Why were so many spies set to work to find out where I went? Why have so many honourable gentlemen been examined in such a strange fashion?' He demands, moreover, to be allowed to come to Bologna, and justify himself before some wise and impartial judge, 'which, however,' says Tiraboschi quietly, 'does not appear to have been granted to him.' The letter bears date the last day of February 1564, and was written from Castelvetro, at that time a feudal tenure of the Counts Rangoni within the territory of Modena.

Tasso was thus within a few days of having completed his twentieth year when he left Bologna.

During his second sojourn in Padua he appears to have sketched out the first plan of his great epic, the 'Jerusalem Delivered,' which he intended from the first to dedicate to Duke Alfonso d'Este, sovereign of Ferrara. In the year 1565 he was formally invited by the duke to take up his abode at the court of the latter. Chambers were provided for him in the ducal palace, 'and all his wants so considered, as that he should be able at his leisure, and free from care, to serve the Muse both by contemplation and composition; the which, in truth, he did, by proceeding with the poem of the "Jerusalem Delivered," and writing those earlier rhymes and dialogues in prose which were the first to be beheld with eagerness and astonishment by the world.' (Manso: *Life of Torquato Tasso*.)

If ever ghosts walked in the sunlight, I think they would choose the long, sunny, grass-grown, silent, slowly crumbling streets of Ferrara for such wanderings. The changes there for the last three centuries or so have been brought about, not so much by the advent of new things, as by the fading and decay of the old. Like

an antique arras sorely preyed upon by moth and dust, Ferrara yet preserves a faint and colourless image of the olden time; and her aspect appeals to the fancy with all that pathos which belongs to things once stately and noble, now rotting in oblivion and decay. As Browning, in his poem entitled 'A Toccata of Galuppi,' speaks of the fair Venetian dames who used to listen to that quaint music, toying with a velvet mask or drinking in soft sounds of courtship covered by the tinkle of the harpsichord, and exclaims, with the sensitiveness of a poet—

What's become of all the gold
Used to fall and brush their bosoms?
I feel chilly and grown old!

so one may feel chilly in the sunny streets of Ferrara, thinking of all those brave figures, shining with beauty, valour, splendour, and genius, which used to pace them, and have marched across the illuminated disc of this life into the fathomless shadow of the dread beyond.

Duke Hercules, the immediate predecessor of Tasso's patron — Alfonso II., had beautified and extended his city very greatly — In his time and under his auspices a whole new quarter sprang up, enclosed by an extended circuit of walls fortified according to the military science of that day. He caused a number of new streets to be planned, and compelled the monks of various religious houses, such, for example, as the Monastery of St. Catherine of the Angels, and of the Carthusians, to sell or let on lease their lands which bordered on the new streets, in order to have stately mansions constructed on them. In this way, in the Via degli Angeli alone there arose four or five truly magnificent palaces, besides other handsome edifices; and of these palaces the visitor to Ferrara will probably remember most vividly the Palazzo de Diamanti, so called because the whole of its façade is covered with massive stonework, each block of which is cut in facets, like the surface of a precious stone. This splendid building existed, then, in Tasso's time; but when he first saw it, it was not yet completed. It belonged to the Cardinal Luigi d'Este, to whom it had been bequeathed by Duke Hercules, together with a sum of money to finish it. And the Cardinal finished it accordingly in 1567—that is to say, two years after Tasso first went to reside at the court of Ferrara. The city was then a brilliant scene, the resort of the most famous, talented, and illustrious Italians of the day. Beauty, rank, and genius figured on that stage. The first parts, the leading personages in the drama, were admirably filled; even tragic elements were not wanting to complete the interest and prevent

any chance of a monotony of cheerfulness! A great poet suffering from hopeless love and forcibly imprisoned amongst maniacs, for instance, must have been a thrilling incident. As to the choral masses in the background, the crowd which figured in dumb show, the populace, in short, they suffered a good deal from pestilence and famine in those days; both which scourges fell, of course, more heavily on the poor than on the rich. But still it appears that Alfonso II. did his best for them according to his conceptions of his duty. The population of the city, according to a census taken in 1592 by command of Pope Clement VIII. soon after the death of Duke Alfonso, amounted to 41,710 souls, *exclusive* of ecclesiastics, foreigners, and Jews; including those categories, it reached to over 60,000. The number of inhabitants in Ferrara in the present year is but 30,000!

In the year 1570 (according to Tiraboschi and Rosini, 1572 according to Manso) Tasso accompanied the Cardinal Luigi d'Este on an embassy with which the latter was charged by Pope Gregory XIII., to the court of Charles IX. of France. There the poet was loaded with flattery and honours; the king himself particularly delighting to distinguish him for the reason, as it is alleged by contemporary biographers, that Tasso had paid such a splendid tribute to the valour of the French nation in his great poem of 'Goffredo.' Thus it would seem that the 'Jerusalem Delivered' was originally destined to bear the name of Godfrey de Bouillon, and also that it was far enough advanced at the period of Tasso's visit to France to allow of a portion of it having become known to the world, at least to the little world of courtiers who surrounded the poet.

But Tasso did not remain very long in France. Within a twelvemonth he returned to Ferrara, drawn thither by an irresistible attraction—his unhappy and misplaced passion for the Duchess Eleonora d'Este. It appears clearly from the poet's own words¹ that he became fantastically enamoured of the princess's portrait before he had seen her; for on his first arrival in Ferrara, during the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of Duke Alfonso with Barbara of Austria, Eleonora was too indisposed to leave her room. But very soon his love ceased to be merely a fantastic dream, and became only too serious and fervent. On her part, the princess was touched and flattered by the adoration of the greatest poet of his day, who was at the same time a very accomplished cavalier. She seems to have had an insatiable appetite for his homage, his praises, conveyed in immortal verse,

¹ Sonnet 149. Edition of Pisa. *Nel tuo real petto.*

and his respectful worship of her, at a distance. But the best testimony of the most illustrious Italian commentators seems to exclude the idea that the princess so derogated from her rank as to return Tasso's love like a woman of a less illustrious breed, or as he very certainly desired that she should return it. Scandals of a much graver kind than a love intrigue between an unmarried princess and a poet were rife enough in that time and place to make such a suspicion neither strange nor improbable. But various circumstances, minutely searched for, sifted, and collated, concur to show that there is no ground for darkening Eleonora's maiden fame.

But she cannot, I fear, be acquitted on a different count, that, namely, of a cold, hard, and unwomanly indifference to the terrible misfortunes which fell upon Torquato Tasso for love of her. During his long and horrible imprisonment in the hospital of St. Anna, she vouchsafed no reply to his heartrending appeals to her for mercy; nor, so far as is known, did she make one effort to intercede with the duke her brother for his release. It is true, however, and may be pleaded as an extenuating circumstance, that to have done so might have endangered her own position in her brother's court, and might even have resulted in her own imprisonment in some dull cloister, which Madonna Eleonora would have found a dreary exchange for her brilliant, luxurious, flattered existence in Ferrara. Let the excuse count for what it is worth, but after reading the earlier story of Tasso's intercourse with her, the blank, implacable silence with which she received his cries from prison chills and oppresses one after three centuries.

After his return from France, Tasso continued to work at the '*Gerusalemme Liberata*,' and produced also a very different species of poem, in the charming dramatic pastoral of '*Aminta*,' which has furnished the model for innumerable other dramas of the same kind. It was represented for the first time in Ferrara, in the year 1573, with great pomp and splendour. Afterwards it was played at Florence, the scenery and decorations being under the direction of the celebrated architect, Bontalenti. It was received with universal applause, and no sooner was it printed than it was translated into several European languages. The Duchess of Urbino (Lucrezia, sister of Alfonso and Eleonora d'Este) sent for the poet to her court, in order that he might read it to her himself; and he spent some pleasant and tranquil months with this princess, partly at Urbino, and partly in a country seat near to it. He returned, in company with the Duchess Lucrezia, to Ferrara, and not long afterwards made part of the suite of gentlemen who accompanied the reigning Duke Alfonso when the latter went into the Venetian

Provinces to meet Henry III. of France, who had then newly succeeded to that throne, on his way from Poland. There was a great gathering of grandees at Venice, and later at Ferrara, whither the Duke invited Henry III., the Cardinal of San Sisto (nephew of Pope Gregory XIII.), Duke Emanuel Philibert of Savoy, Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga of Mantua, and many other notable and puissant seigneurs, to accompany him. The great heats (it was the month of July under an Italian sun), or the fatigues of the journey, or the much banqueting in Venice, or all three causes combined, gave our Tasso a quartan fever, accompanied by so great a languor and weakness, as to compel him to renounce all studious application for a time. His health was not fully re-established until the spring of 1575, in which year he had the satisfaction of completing his great poem of the '*Jerusalem Delivered*.'

And respecting the completion of this fine work certain facts have to be recorded, which it is well to warn the reader are facts; for here the authentic narrative takes upon itself an air of impertinent irony, which might well be attributed to the innocent transcriber of historic events as a flippant attempt to hold up to ridicule the whole race of critics! than whom no variety of the human species are less mirth-inspiring to a right-minded author.

Tasso, then, distrustful of his own powers, thought fit to submit his yet unpublished epic to the judgment of various learned men of letters, who, although it does not appear that they have ever produced anything themselves which posterity delights to honour, yet had a great reputation in their day as holding the secret of the only authentic road by which to reach readers in centuries yet unborn. Unfortunately, it turned out that these erudite persons differed in opinion among themselves to a degree quite fatally confusing to the minds of those who consulted them. For example, it may interest readers of the '*Jerusalem Delivered*,' whether in the original or in Fairfax's translation, to know that several critics considered that the protagonist too manifestly eclipsed all the secondary heroes of the poem; that Scipio Gonzaga pronounced the episode of Erminia too improbable; that Sperone Speroni found the '*unity of action*' defective; that another objected to the descriptions of Armida and her enchanted garden as too glowing; and that Silvio Antoniano wished that not only all the enchantments, but all the love scenes of whatever nature, should be ruthlessly cut out altogether. Moreover, the episode of Sofronia and Olindo, now deemed one of the most touching and beautiful in the whole poem, very narrowly escaped excision, because the

otherwise conflicting critics were nearly unanimous in condemning it. Fortunately for us of these later times, Tasso, after undergoing a great deal of annoyance, and many struggles with his better judgment, resolved to pay as little heed to his censors as possible. His dilemma, however, is one which will recur again and again; for the ideal conceptions of a great genius will always be so far above and beyond his performance, as to make the suggestion of amendments in the latter seem very possible to him. But the discontent and diffidence of an extraordinary mind as to its own work is a very different matter from the power of an ordinary mind to better it.

The anxiety and curiosity with which the publication of the 'Jerusalem Delivered' was expected, indirectly caused Tasso endless pain and mortification, for the cantos were seized upon one by one as they were finished, and before the poet had time to revise or reconsider them, and passed from hand to hand until they reached some publisher of the day, who gave them to the press full of errors, and even with huge gaps here and there of an entire stanza. Manso says that the MSS. of his poem were got from Tasso in this fragmentary manner partly by the importunity of friends, partly by the commands of his sovereign masters. Alas, poor poet! Then, too, there assailed him a furious warfare waged by the Academicians of the Crusca against the 'Jerusalem Liberated.' This critical body was not exempt from the destiny which appears to afflict all similar institutions, namely, a strange adjustment of the focus of their 'mind's eye,' which makes them unable to perceive genius at a lesser distance than one or two centuries back. One of their number, a Florentine, Lionardo Salviati, published a pamphlet in which he pronounces Tasso inferior not only to Ariosto, which might be a tenable opinion, but to Bojardo and Pulci! Upon which one of Tasso's biographers mildly observes that this is a judgment 'most unworthy of one who had the reputation of being learned in the Greek, Latin, and Italian literatures, and of a first-rate critic' (*un critico di prim' ordine*). And he subjoins farther on, 'If criticisms dictated by a spirit of party serve to retard the justice due to an original writer, the latter can, however, easily console himself by the certain hope of occupying that place in the temple of glory which posterity, severe and infallible in its judgments, will assign to him.' A comfortable doctrine of the all-the-same-a-hundred-years-hence pattern, with which certain minds 'easily console themselves' for the misfortunes of other people!

Some time before the completion of his great poem Tasso had the grief of losing his father. Bernardo Tasso had continued uninterruptedly in the service of Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, and

died on September 4, 1569, at a place called Ostia, on the Po, of which town he was governor. Torquato hastened to his father, attended him lovingly in his last illness, and after his death consecrated some of his finest verses to his memory.

And now follow thickly on each other's heels misfortune after misfortune, mortification after mortification, treachery after treachery. Envy, hatred, malice, and all the uncharitableness which haunt a court, made Torquato Tasso the chief mark for their poisoned shafts; he stood high enough above the crowd to be well aimed at. Guarini (the author of the '*Pastor Fido*') set up to be his rival not only in poetry but in the good graces of the Princess Eleonora, and Guarini was a man who might well make the lover, if not the poet, jealous. In 1573 Tasso visited the court of Urbino, and refrained during several months from writing to Eleonora; and that his silence was due to the pain and indignation he felt at seeing (or fancying he saw—the effect on his mind was the same) a rival preferred to himself by the lady whom he had so long and devotedly served, is abundantly set forth by Professor Rosini. But the proofs he has patiently accumulated are far too voluminous for even a portion of them to be given here; and I advise any reader who is interested in the subject to consult Rosini's '*Saggio sugli Amori di Torquato Tasso*,' inserted in the seventeenth volume of the Pisan edition of Tasso's works published by Niccolò Caparro. Envy, base intrigues, and the blackest treachery, prepared and forged the first link in the chain of misery with which henceforward Tasso was bound. Towards the close of the year 1576 (when Tasso was thirty-three years old) a gentleman of the court of Ferrara, his trusted and cherished friend, with whom, in the words of Manso, 'he had held all things in common, even his thoughts,' betrayed certain secrets, which Tasso had confided to him, to the duke. These 'secrets' appear to have been love verses addressed to the Duchess Eleonora, without any superscription, or else, in several cases, with a misleading one, such as 'verses written for a friend to his mistress,' and so forth. The poems which are still extant are very impassioned, and such as, when addressed by a subject to a woman of Eleonora's rank, were certain to excite the haughty indignation of a despotic prince. By way of example it may suffice to indicate Sonnet 185, the dialogue entitled '*Dubbio Sciolto*' (Rime, vol. ii. p. 119), and the sonnets numbered 258 and 259. Tasso meets this false friend in the courtyard of the ducal palace in Ferrara, upbraids him with his treachery, and, infuriated by the cynical coolness of his betrayer, strikes him on the face. A duel ensues, in which Tasso (who was a fine swordsman) is manifestly getting the best of it, when two

brothers of his adversary come up. All three attack Tasso, who valorously defends himself, and in the midst of a great tumult the combatants are finally separated by the populace. It does not appear that any immediate punishment was inflicted on Tasso, but on the 17th of June in the following year (1577) he was arrested on the accusation of having drawn a dagger on a servant in the apartments of the Duchess of Urbino. He was imprisoned in a room of the palace looking upon the interior courtyard. But after about ten days' confinement he was not only liberated, but the Duke carried him with him on a visit to his ducal villa of Belriguardo, where Tasso passed nearly a fortnight in the intimate companionship of his sovereign. But now mark the change, sudden and terrible as a clap of thunder from a serene sky. On July 11 Tasso is sent back under guard to Ferrara, where he is shut up in the Monastery of San Francesco, and declared by the duke's secretary to be a confirmed maniac! (*pazzo spacciato*.) Now, it is to be particularly observed that up to that 17th of June, on which day he was arrested for threatening the servant (as it is said), no hint or suspicion appears to have been rife that Torquato Tasso was not completely sane. He walked, as Tennyson phrases it, 'with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies,' but not even the fertility in lying of envious courtiers had as yet invented the accusation of madness against him. No; this is only launched after the fortnight spent in intimate seclusion with Duke Alfonso at Belriguardo. The explanation given of this strange fact by Rosini reposes upon a mass of evidence which neither time nor space permits us to examine here. Told with brevity and inevitable incompleteness it is this: that the duke, being still doubtful as to the truth of the accusations against Tasso (which accusations were simply that he not only loved the Princess Eleonora, but aspired and desired to be loved by her in return, and had written verses strongly implying that he was so), was determined to examine into the matter for himself; that for this purpose, and under the guise of sovereign grace and favour, he carried Tasso with him to a retired country house, and there subjected the unhappy poet to a kind of moral torture or question, as appears very clearly from the lines addressed by Tasso about this time to the spirit of Alfonso's father, the great Duke Hercules:

Alma grande d'Alcide, io so che miri
 L'aspro rigor della real tua prole;
 Che con *insolite arti*, atti, e parole,
 Trar da me cerca onde con me s'adiri.

(Great soul of Alcides, I know thou dost behold the harsh rigour of thy royal scion, who with unusual arts, and acts, and words,

seeks to draw from me that which inflames his wrath against me.) That, having satisfied himself as to the existence of the poet's presumptuous passion, Alfonso proposed to him, as the only method by which he could escape drawing worse evils on himself—and, what was infinitely more important in Alfonso d'Este's eyes, avoid raising any scandal against the Princess Eleonora—to feign madness! Extraordinary and incredible as such a theory appears at first sight, there are nevertheless a hundred circumstances, and a hundred passages in the writings of the unhappy poet, which tend strongly to confirm its being the true one. Perhaps the most remarkable of all these occurs in the famous letter addressed by Tasso to the Duke of Urbino. In this he says that, in order to regain the duke's (Alfonso's) good graces, he did not think it shameful 'to be the third with Brutus and Solon.' Now, of Solon Plutarch relates that he deliberated to feign himself out of his senses, and his servants spread the report throughout the city that he had gone mad; and Brutus is represented by Livy, *ex industria factus ad imitationem stultitiæ*. Surely this is very striking and remarkable! And what follows in Tasso's letter is not less so. He says:—'I hoped thus by this confession of madness to open so large a road to the benevolence of the duke, as that, with time, the opportunity should not fail me of undeceiving him and others—if any others there were who held so false and unmerited an opinion of me.' Under what conceivable circumstance could it open a way to the benevolence of the duke for Tasso to confess himself mad, save on the hypothesis that the duke desired him to appear so?

However, Torquato, either finding himself unable to keep up the ignoble comedy, or fearing that even the reputation of madness might not avail to secure him from worse treatment, fled from the Monastery of San Francesco a few days after his incarceration there, namely, on July 20, 1577. He departed alone and on foot, and at length, after a journey made in the midst of unspeakable trouble of mind and hardships of body, he reached Rome, where he remained a short time in the house of his old friend and tutor, Maurizio Cattaneo. But here anxieties and suspicions continued to torment him. He seems to have been haunted by the fear of being poisoned. Nor, when we remember the frequent instances in which this sovereign receipt for getting rid of a dangerous foe or a troublesome friend had been applied in Italy, can we set down Tasso's fear as the mere figment of a diseased brain. The poet's heart turned longingly towards the home of his childhood, and towards his sister Cornelia, sole survivor of his family. But the decree of the Neapolitan government, which pronounced

him and his father rebels, had never been repealed, and his paternal estates were still confiscated. Tasso was an outlaw in his native land. Nevertheless, the longing to revisit Sorrento and to see his sister became irresistible, and he resolved to gratify it without revealing his purpose to any one. Having gone on a pleasure excursion to Frascati, he set off thence on foot, secretly, and quite alone, to make the romantic journey which has been so often celebrated by pen and pencil.

We can fancy we see the solitary figure traversing a lonely path at the foot of the mountains, towards Velletri, as the summer evening closes in. Behind him are the rugged hills mantled in purple shadow, home and cradle of the great Latin people whose story has filled every gorge and crowned every peak of them with immortal memories. In front stretches the mysterious and quiet Campagna towards the unquiet and mysterious sea. On the horizon Rome sits brooding on her seven hills, but the great dome of St. Peter's does not yet loom in supreme majesty above the city. It is still unfinished, the drum of the cupola alone being as yet completed. The soil is strewn with colossal fragments of a colossal past; mighty receptacles of dead ashes and living waters, the tombs and aqueducts glimmer white through the brief southern twilight. All is still, silent, forlorn; only at intervals some savage buffalo raises his sullen front from the coarse herbage at the unwonted sound of a footstep, or a wild bird flutters with swift scared flight across the wanderer's path. Infinite sadness on the vast dim plain, infinite sadness in the poet's heart—poor weary human heart, turning from the cruel glitter of courts and the vain-glories of public praise, with a sick yearning for love, and truth, and peace!

Near Velletri, Tasso changed clothes with a shepherd, in whose cane-thatched hut he passed the night, and next morning pursued his journey. After four days of toilsome travel he reached Gaeta, nearly spent with fatigue, and here, by good chance, he found a bark of Sorrento about to return to that port without touching at Naples. In company with a number of humble passengers—peasants, fishermen, and the like—he embarked in her, and after a prosperous voyage, sailing all night upon the calm summer sea, he reached Sorrento and landed there at sunrise. He went at once to his sister's house. She had married, the reader will remember, Marzio Sersale, a noble cavalier of Sorrento, and was now a widow with two sons. Torquato found her alone, and, feigning to be a messenger from her brother, gave her so lamentable an account of his state and his fortunes that the poor woman, overcome with grief and agitation, swooned away.

If Tasso's object had been to ascertain his sister's true sentiments towards him, he had certainly attained it. He hastened to reassure her as soon as she recovered consciousness, and by degrees revealed himself as the long-absent brother whom she so tenderly loved, and told her all the particulars of his flight from Ferrara, and its cause. He conjured her to keep his presence in Sorrento secret, and she promised to obey him, only making an exception in favour of her sons, Antonino and Alessandro, to whom she confided that the poorly-clad and wretched-looking messenger was no other than their illustrious uncle, with whose fame all Europe was ringing. To the world she gave out that a cousin of hers from Bergamo was come to visit her.

And now fortune, weary of tormenting her victim, allowed Torquato to enjoy three months of peace and rest amidst the devoted affection of his family and the exquisite beauties of that lovely spot. His two nephews were his constant companions in many an excursion in the neighbourhood, and from the lips of the eldest of them, Antonino, the Marchese Manso gathered the foregoing particulars of Tasso's flight and arrival at Sorrento, which he records in his biography of the poet. But Tasso had not been there above three months before there arrived missives urging him to return to the Court of Ferrara. He himself states distinctly that Madonna Eleonora wrote to persuade him to go back. But for a time he resisted, although his passion for the princess was by no means quenched even by the 'heroic' method (as Italian doctors phrase it) taken by Duke Alfonso to cure him of any overweening attachment to the house of Este. He caused his sister Cornelia to reply to the princess's letter for him, imploring her Highness to permit her to retain her brother with her yet a while after so long an absence, and appealing to her Highness's compassion in moving terms. Tasso himself also wrote to the Duke and Duchess of Ferrara, and to Lucrezia Duchess of Urbino, in the same sense, none of these great personages answering his letters except Madonna Eleonora, who wrote again, urging, nay, commanding him in the most peremptory terms, to return to her brother's court. This fact, it will at once be perceived, is very important, inasmuch as it proves that there was great anxiety at the Court of Ferrara to get Tasso into their power again; and also that an appeal from Eleonora was deemed the most efficacious means for attaining that object—as, in fact, it proved to be. Tasso could not resist the influence of the princess. But at the moment of setting out from Sorrento he said to his sister that 'he was going to submit himself to a voluntary imprisonment.'¹ A remarkable phrase, all the

¹ Manso: *Vita di Torquato Tasso*, p. 147.

circumstances considered! He reached Rome early in the spring of 1578, and there fell sick of a tertian fever, of which he was not yet wholly cured when he set out again in company with the Cavaliere Gualengo (ambassador of Duke Alfonso in Rome), and finally arrived in Ferrara about the end of March, or a little later.

A series of disappointments and mortifications awaited him here. The duke appeared to treat him with cool contempt; he was denied access to him and to the princesses; and not only so, but was frequently repulsed by the servants with insolence and indignities. But the real key of the enigma is contained in the following passage from the previously quoted letter to the Duke of Urbino:—‘He’ (the duke) ‘would fain have had me aspire to no praise of intellect, to no fame of letters, and that amidst ease and comfort and pleasures I should lead a soft and luxurious life, passing, like an exile, from honour, from Parnassus, the Lyceum, and the Academy, to the school of Epicurus, and especially to that part of his school which neither Virgil, nor Catullus, nor Horace, nor Lucretius himself ever frequented.’ In a word, the duke having declared him mad, insisted that he should continue to pass for such, on pain not only of losing his sovereign favour but of being severely punished. There is no other explanation of these words. Tasso’s original claim to the duke’s favour was his genius, and his genius only. The duke had invited him to his court, and had shown him honour there, solely because he was acknowledged to be a man of such eminence that his fame would shed a new lustre even on the illustrious house of Este. The greater the poet, the greater the patron! And now this same Duke Alfonso desires to stifle Tasso’s genius, to smother his writings, to drag him from Parnassus down to ‘Epicurus’ sty.’ He is to lead a merely animal life, well-fed, well-clothed, well-lodged, and all that the good duke asks in return is the sacrifice of his genius, his fame, his heart, his mind, and his soul! Unreasonable and irritable poet! Will it be believed that Tasso found the bargain intolerable, and once more fled from his benefactor?

He fled to Mantua, to Venice, to Urbino, to Piedmont, wandering from court to court, and finding mostly but cold comfort; for, as he piteously says in the often-quoted letter to the Duke of Urbino, ‘interest and the desire to be pleasing to princes shut the door against compassion.’ An exception must be made to this statement in favour of Charles Emanuel, Prince of Piedmont, who received Tasso with the honours due to his merit, and offered him the same brilliant position that he had enjoyed at first at the court of Ferrara, if he would enter his service. But it was not to be. Alfonso spared no effort to recover the fugitive. He sent a gentle-

man after him to Pesaro to persuade him to go back, and other temptations were not wanting. In an ode addressed to the Princesses of Ferrara, the poet says himself that he was 'deluded' by false promises. But the main accomplice in seconding the duke's desire was in Tasso's own breast—his unconquerable passion for Eleonora, and yearning to see her again. In brief, despite the 'strong dissuasions' of the Prince of Piedmont and other gentlemen, Tasso returned once more to fatal Ferrara on February 21, 1579, and two days after was arrested on a charge of having uttered 'false, insane, and audacious words against the duke,' and imprisoned in the madhouse of St. Anna.

And here the unhappy poet remained for seven years; seven years of misery such as few human beings have been subjected to. Despite what has been said in mitigation of the horrors of his imprisonment, it is but too clear that it was hard and cruel and harsh beyond measure. Tasso's own words on this subject are, alas! too explicit to be mistaken. Heartrending, in truth, are the terms in which he laments and complains to the deaf ears of his former patrons. To the Duchess Marguerita Gonzaga, third wife of Alfonso, he speaks of making his 'gloomy cell' resound with weeping.¹ In a letter to Gonzaga he says that, 'oppressed by the weight of so many afflictions, he has abandoned all thought of glory and honour;' that, 'tormented by thirst, he envies even the condition of the brutes who can freely quench theirs at rivers and fountains;' and that 'the horror of his state is aggravated by the squalor of his hair and beard and clothes, and the sordidness and filth which he sees around him.' Still more horrible are certain phrases which occur in his 'Discourse' to Scipio Gonzaga. Here he says, 'I do not refuse to suffer this punishment, but it hurts me that an unwonted severity is used towards me, and that a new method of castigation is invented for me;' and after those last dreadful words follows a blank filled up with asterisks. The same thing occurs again and again in the course of this 'Discorso,' and the reason is that Sandelli, who first published it, deemed it prudent to suppress certain phrases and statements which would have furnished too tremendous an indictment against the 'magnanimous' Alfonso d'Este, and others of his house. The original MS. from which Sandelli printed his version of the Discourse has eluded the most zealous search, and in all probability was purposely destroyed.

A cell, lighted only by one small grated window, has for generations been shown to visitors in the hospital of Santa Anna as

¹ Sonnet 426, *Sposa real*.

the place of Tasso's imprisonment. A gloomy and terrible place indeed for such a man to pass seven years of his life in! Of late it has become the fashion to deny the authenticity of 'Tasso's prison,' as the cell is called. You are told that the poet never lived there; that he had excellent light and airy rooms in another part of the hospital—what part is not known—and that the compassion excited by the view of the cell is quite superfluous. Even the guardian who now shows it to the stranger (I revisited Ferrara in the late autumn of 1876), although he clings to the statement that Tasso was veritably confined within those narrow massive walls, declares that in the poet's time there was a larger window looking on the courtyard, and plenty of light and air. Now, for my own part, I see no reason whatever to doubt that tradition is in this, as in so many similar cases, a trustworthy guide. The aspect of the cell agrees perfectly with that which Tasso himself says of his prison. It does not agree with that which courtly gentlemen writing within the times, and by no means beyond reach of the influence of the house of Este, have said of it. The reader is at liberty to choose between these conflicting statements.

Here, then, sighed and wept, and perhaps raved, in the bitter despair and indignation of his soul, Torquato Tasso, an honourable gentleman, a faithful friend, and incomparably the greatest poet of his day. To punish him for the crime of loving his sister, Duke Alfonso gave him obloquy in exchange for glory, solitude for the brilliant society of a court, and instead of the sound of lutes and harmonious voices, the clanking of chains and the howls of maniacs. I cannot presume to decide whether or not there were some morbid strain in Tasso's intellect before he entered St. Anna, but that he did not become a frenzied lunatic before he left it seems to me to indicate a most amazing force of mind.

It is a sickening task to con over the numerous appeals which the wretched prisoner made to the outside world for help. He petitioned the princesses, the Duke of Urbino, the Duke and Duchess of Mantua, various persons at the court of the Emperor Rudolph and at that of Pope Gregory XIII., the Dukes of Savoy and Tuscany, and the supreme council of the city of his ancestors, Bergamo, to intercede with his princely gaoler. The good citizens of Bergamo did in truth accede to his prayer. His petition (a very touching one) was read in the council amidst tears of pity. They sent a special ambassador to Alfonso to beg him to release Tasso, and the duke received the ambassador very graciously, and promised to fulfil his request, and the poor prisoner was so elated with hope at the report of this princely promise (strange that he

should have believed it even then!) as to be in hourly expectation of release for several days! And then—and then he was plunged back again into the gloom of despair, and months and years passed by and found him still in his dungeon.

At length he left it, with spirits shattered and body enfeebled. The chief instrument of his release was the Abbate Angelo Grillo, whose name should be known and honoured for this good work. The abbate importuned the Emperor and the Pope, and all the great ones of the earth whom he thought likely to assist his object. And finally, in the year of our Lord 1586, and the forty-second of his age, he was allowed to quit the scene of so much misery and degradation. Ferrara was holding high festival on the occasion of the nuptials of Cesare d'Este with Virginia de Medici; amongst the guests gathered there was young Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, the son and heir of Guglielmo, Bernardo Tasso's old patron. This youth, induced by the zealous representations of the Abbate Grillo, begged and obtained from Alfonso the permission to carry Tasso with him to Mantua, on condition, however, of keeping him there under strict supervision. After a time this was relaxed, and he was free to go whither he would, except back to Ferrara.

Little is to be said here of the remaining years of our poet's life. He revisited Naples, made a brief sojourn in Florence, and finally came to Rome, whither he was invited to receive the laurel crown in the Capitol. But a pale, inexorable hand withheld the wreath from those worn temples. Tasso came to Rome but to die. He took up his abode among the monks of Sant' Onofrio, the monastery which stands on the Janiculum and dominates the city and the winding course of the Tiber for many a mile. In the convent garden an ancient oak-tree stood up to the year 1842, which tradition said had been a favourite haunt of the poet. It was greatly injured by a storm in that year, but something of it still remains. There remain, too, the grand outlines of the Sabine and Alban Hills, on which his eyes must often have rested, looking from that lofty garden terrace on to the superb panorama it commands. The sunset light, too, was not different three hundred years ago. Often he must have sat in its rosy glow whilst the spring was smiling around him, and thought of the fast-coming moment when for him the sunshine and the scent of violets and the song of birds should be no more. He died on April 25, 1595, aged fifty-one years. The symbolic crowning in the Capitol was destined not to be, yet none the less do the voices of fame and posterity award Torquato Tasso a high place among the immortal bards: *Dñs miscent superis*. He was laid to rest in the Monastery of Sant' Onofrio,

where a tasteless monument has been erected over his tomb, and where his chamber, and a crucifix and other objects used by him, are pointed out to the visitor. In a corridor upon which this chamber opens there is a fresco on the wall by Lionardo da Vinci, a lovely Madonna and child, with the donor of the picture kneeling before her ; and on this fine work, full of the intense serious sentiment which distinguishes Lionardo, our poet's eyes must often have rested sympathetically. Perhaps those last days, during which his tide of life was ebbing, were not among the saddest he had known. Poor, vexed spirit ! 'After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.'

An Irish Idyll.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE QUEEN OF CONNAUGHT.'

WE had been out all night watching the herring-fishers; but as soon as the work was over, and the faint glimmering of dawn appeared in the east, we turned our boat's bow towards the shore, and pulled swiftly homewards. There lay the group of currachs, still upon the scene of their labour, loaded with phosphorescent fish and dripping nets, and manned with crews of shivering weary men. The sea, which during the night had been throbbing convulsively, was calm and bright as a polished mirror, while the gaunt grey cliffs were faintly shadowed forth by the lustrous light of the ~~moon~~.

Wearied with my night's labour I lay listlessly in the stern of the boat, listening dreamily to the measured splash, splash, of the oars, and drinking in the beauty of the scene around me: the placid sea, the black outline of the hills and cliffs, the silently sleeping village of Storport. Presently, however, my ears detected another sound, which came faintly across the water, and mingled softly with the monotonous splashing of the oars and the weary washing of the sea.

'Is it a mermaid singing?' I asked sleepily. 'The village maidens are all dreaming of their lovers at this hour, but the Midian Maras sing of theirs. Oh, yes, it must be a mermaid, for hark! the sound is issuing from the shore yonder, and surely no human being ever possessed a voice half so beautiful!'

To my question no one vouchsafed a reply, so I lay still half-sleepily and listened to the plaintive wailing of the voice, which every moment grew stronger. It came across the water like the low sweet sound of an *Æolian* harp touched by the summer breeze; and as the boat glided swiftly on, bringing it ever nearer, the whole scene around seemed suddenly to brighten as if from the touch of a magical hand. Above me sailed the moon, scattering pale vitreous light around her, and touching with her cool white hand the mellow thatched cabins, lying so secluded on the hillside, the long stretch of shimmering sand, the fringe of foam upon the shingle, the peaks of the hills which stood silhouetted against the pale grey sky.

A white owl passing across the boat, and almost brushing my cheek with its wing, aroused me at length from my torpor. The

sound of the voice had ceased. Above my head a flock of seagulls screamed, and, as they sailed away, I heard the whistle of the curlew; little puffins were floating thick as bees around us, wild rock-doves flew swiftly from the caverns, and beyond again the cormorants blackened the weed-covered rocks. The splash of our oars had for a moment created a commotion; presently all calmed down again, and again I heard the plaintive wailing of the mermaid's voice. The voice, more musical than ever, was at length so distinct as to bring with it the words of the song:—

'My Owen Bawn's hair is of thread gold spun;
Of gold in the shadow, of light in the sun;
All curled in a coolun the bright tresses are,
They make his head radiant with beams like a star!

My Owen Bawn's mantle is long and is wide,
To wrap me up safe from the storm by his side;
And I'd rather face snow-drift and winter wind there,
Than be among daisies and sunshine elsewhere.

My Owen Bawn Con is a bold fisherman,
He spears the strong salmon in midst of the Bann,
And, rocked in the tempest on stormy Lough Neagh,
Draws up the red trout through the bursting of spray.'

The voice suddenly ceased, and as it did so, I saw that the singer was a young girl who, with her hands clasped behind her, and her face turned to the moonlit sky, walked slowly along the shore. Suddenly she paused, and while the sea kissed her bare feet, and the moon laid tremulous hands upon her head, began to sing again:

'I have called my love, but he still sleeps on,
And his lips are as cold as clay:
I have kissed them o'er and o'er again—
I have pressed his cheek with my burning brow,
And I've watched o'er him all the day;
Is it then true that no more thou'lt smile
On Moina?
Art thou then lost to thy Moina?

I once had a lamb my love gave me,
As the mountain snow 'twas white;
Oh, how I loved it nobody knows!
I decked it each morn with the myrtle rose,
With "forget-me-not" at night.
My lover they slew, and they tore my lamb
From Moina.
They pierced the heart's core of poor Moina!'

As the last words fell from her tremulous lips, and the echoes

of the sweet voice faded far away across the sea, the boat gliding gently on ran her bow into the sand, and I, leaping out, came suddenly face to face with the loveliest vision I had ever beheld.

'Is it a mermaid?' I asked myself again, for surely I thought no human being could be half so lovely.

I saw a pale madonna-like face set in a wreath of golden hair, on which the moonlight brightened and darkened like the shadows on a wind-swept sea. Large lustrous eyes which gazed earnestly seaward, then filled with a strange wandering far-off look as they turned to my face. A young girl, clad in a peasant's dress, with her bare feet washed reverently by the sighing sea; her half-parted lips kissed by the breeze which travelled slowly shoreward; her cheeks and neck were pale as alabaster, so were the little hands which were still clasped half nervously behind her; and as she stood, with her eyes wandering restlessly first to my face, then to the dim line of the horizon, the moon, brightening with sudden splendour, wrapt her from head to foot in a mantle of shimmering snow.

For a moment she stood gazing with a peculiar far-away look into my face; then with a sigh she turned away, and with her face still turned oceanward, her hands still clasped behind her, wandered slowly along the moonlit sands.

As she went, fading like a spirit amid the shadows, I heard again the low sweet sound of the plaintive voice which had come to me across the ocean, but soon it grew fainter and fainter until only the echoes were heard.

I turned to my boatman, who now stood waiting for me to depart.

'Well, Shawn, is it a mermaid?' I asked, smiling.

He gravely shook his head.

'No, yer honour; 'tis only a poor Colleen wid a broken heart!'

I turned and looked questioningly at him, but he was gazing at the spot whence the figure of the girl had disappeared.

'God Almighty, risht the dead!' he said, reverently raising his hat, 'but him that brought such luck to Norah O'Connell deserved His curse, God knows!'

This incident, coupled with the strange manner of my man, interested me, and I began to question him as to the story of the girl whose lovely face was still vividly before me. But for some reason or other he seemed to shun the subject, so for a time I too held my peace. But as soon as I found myself comfortably seated in the cosy parlour of the lodge, with a bright turf fire blazing

before me and hot punch steaming on the table at my side, I summoned my henchman to my presence.

‘Now, Shawn,’ I said, holding forth a steaming goblet which made his eyes sparkle like two stars, ‘close the door, draw your chair up to the fire, drink off this, and tell me the story of the lovely Colleen whom we saw to-night.’

‘Would yer honour really like to hear?’

‘I would; it will give me something to dream about, and prevent me from thinking too much of her beautiful face.’

Shawn smiled gravely.

‘Yer honour thinks her pretty? Well, then, ye’ll believe me when I tell ye that if ye was to search the counthry at the present moment ye couldn’t find a Colleen to match Norah O’Connell. When she was born the neighbours thought she must be a fairy child, she was so pretty and small and white; and when she got older, there wasn’t a boy in Storport but would lay down his life for her. Boys wid fortunes and boys widout fortunes tried to get her; and, begging yer honour’s pardon, I went myself in wid the rest. But it went one way wid us all: Norah just smiled and said she did not want to marry. But one day, two years ago now come this Serapht, that lazy shaugrhaun Miles Doughty (God rest his soul!) came over from Ballygally, and going straight to Norah, widout making up any match at all, asked her to marry him.’

‘Well?’

‘Well, yer honour, this time Norah brightened up, and though she knew well enough that Miles was a dirty blackguard widout a penny in the world—though the old people said no, and there was plenty fortunes in Storport waitin’ on her—she just went against everyone of them and said she must marry Miles. The old people pulled against her at first, but at last Norah, with her smiles and pretty ways, won over Father Tom—who won over the old people, till at last they said that if Miles would go for a while to the black pits of Pennsylvania and earn the money and buy a house and a bit of land, he should marry her.’

He paused, and for a time there was silence. Shawn looked thoughtfully into the fire; I lay back in my easy-chair and carelessly watched the smoke which curled from my cigar, and as I did so I seemed to hear again the wildly plaintive voice of the girl as I had heard it before that night:

I have called my love, but he still sleeps on,
And his lips are as cold as clay:

and as the words of the song passed through my mind, they seemed to tell me the sequel of the story.

‘Another case of disastrous true love,’ I said, turning to Shawn;

and when he looked puzzled I added, 'He died, and she is mourning him?'

'Yes, yer honour, he died; but if that was all he did, we would forgive him. What broke the poor Colleen's heart was that he should forget her when he got to the strange land, and marry another Colleen at the time he should have married her; after that, it was but right that he should die.'

'Did he write and tell her he was married?'

'Write? devil the bit, nor to tell he was dead neither. Here was the poor Colleen watching and waiting for him, for two whole years, and wondering what could keep him; but a few months ago Owen Macgrath, a boy who had gone away from the village long ago on account of Norah refusing to marry him, came back again and told Norah that Miles was dead, and asked her to marry *him*. He had made lots of money, and was ready to take a house and a bit of land and to buy up cattle if she would but say the word to him.'

'Well?'

'Well, yer honour, Norah first shook her head and said that now Miles was dead 'twas as well for her to die too. At this Owen spoke out and asked where was the use of grieving so, since for many months before his death Miles had been a married man! Well, when Owen said this, Norah never spoke a single word, but her teeth set, and her lips and face went white and cold as clay, and ever since that day she has been so strange in her ways that some think she's not right at all. On moonlight nights she creeps out of the house and walks by the sea singing them strange old songs, then she looks out as if expecting him to come to her—and right or wrong, she'll never look at another man!'

As Shawn finished, the hall clock chimed five; the last spark faded from my cigar; the turf fell low in the grate: so I went to bed to think over the story alone.

During the three days which followed this midnight adventure, Storport was visited by a deluge of rain, but on the fourth morning I looked from my window to find the earth basking in summer sunshine. The sky was a vault of throbbing blue, flecked here and there with waves of summer cloud, the stretches of sand grew golden in the sun-rays, while the saturated hills were bright as if from the smiling of the sky. The sight revived me, and as soon as my breakfast was over, I whistled up my dogs and strolled out into the air.

How bright and beautiful everything looked, after the heavy rain! The ground was spongy to the tread; the dew still lay heavily upon the *heather* and long grass; but the sun seemed to be

sucking up the moisture from the bog. Everybody seemed to be out that day; and most people were busy. Old men drove heavily laden donkeys along the muddy road; young girls carried their creels of turf across the bog; and by the roadside, close to where I stood, the turf-cutters were busy.

I stood for a while and watched them at their work, and when I turned to go, I saw for the first time that I had not been alone. Not many yards from me stood a figure watching the turf-cutters too.

A young man dressed like a grotesque figure for a pantomime: with high boots, felt hat cocked rakishly over one eye, and a vest composed of all the colours of the rainbow. His big brown fingers were profusely bedecked with brass and steel rings, a massive brass chain swung from his waistcoat, and an equally showy pin adorned the scarf at his throat. When the turf-cutters, pausing suddenly in their work, gazed at him with wonder in their eyes, he gave a peculiar smile and asked with a strong Yankee accent if they could tell him where one Norah O'Connell lived: he was a stranger here, and brought her news from the States! In a moment a dozen fingers were outstretched to point him on, and the stranger, again smiling strangely to himself, swaggered away.

I stood for a time and watched him go, then I too sauntered on. I turned off from the road, crossed the bog, and made direct for the sea-shore.

I had been walking there for some quarter of an hour, when suddenly a huge shadow was flung across my path, and looking up I again beheld the stranger. His hat was pushed back now, and I saw for the first time that his face was handsome. His cheeks were bronzed and weather-beaten, but his features were finely formed, and on his head clustered a mass of curling chestnut hair. He was flushed as if with excitement; he cast me a hurried glance and disappeared.

Five minutes after, as I still stood wondering at the strange behaviour of the man, my ears were greeted with a shriek which pierced to my very heart. Running in the direction whence the sound proceeded, I reached the top of a neighbouring sand-hill, and gazing into the valley below me I again beheld the stranger. This time his head was bare—his arms were outstretched, and he held upon his breast the half-fainting form of the lovely girl whom I had last beheld in the moonlight. While I stood hesitating as to the utility of descending, I saw the girl gently withdraw herself from his arms, then, clasping her hands around his neck, fall sobbing *on his breast*.

‘Well, Shawn, what’s the news?’ I asked that night when Shawn rushed excitedly into my room. For a time he could tell me nothing, but by dint of a few well-applied questions I soon extracted from him the whole story. It amounted to this: that after working for two years like a galley-slave in the black pits of Pennsylvania, with nothing but the thought of Norah to help him on, Miles Doughty found himself with enough money to warrant his coming home; that he was about to return to Storport, when unfortunately, the day before his intended departure, a shaft in the coal-pit fell upon him and he was left for dead; that for many months he lay ill, but as soon as he was fit to travel he started for home. Arrived in Storport, he was astonished to find that no one knew him, and he was about to pass himself off as a friend of his own, when the news of his reported death and Norah’s sorrow so shocked him that he determined to make himself known at once.

‘And God help the villain that told her he was married,’ concluded Shawn, ‘for he swears he’ll kill him as soon as Norah—God bless her!—comes out o’ the fever that she’s in to-night.’

Just three months after that night, I found myself sitting in the hut where Norah O’Connell dwelt. The cabin was illuminated so brightly that it looked like a spot of fire upon the bog; the rooms in the house were crowded; and without, dark figures gathered as thick as bees in swarming-time. Miles Doughty, clad rather less gaudily than when I first beheld him, moved amidst the throng with bottle and glass, pausing now and again to look affectionately at Norah, who, decorated with her bridal flowers, was dancing with one of the straw men who had come to do honour to her marriage feast. When the dance was ended she came over and stood beside me.

‘Norah,’ I whispered, ‘do you remember that night when I heard you singing songs upon the sands?’

Her face flashed brightly upon me, then it grew grave,—then her eyes filled with tears.

‘My dear,’ I added, ‘I never meant to pain you. I only want you to sing a sequel to those songs to-night!’

She laughed lightly, then she spoke rapidly in Irish, and merrily sang the well-known lines:—

‘Oh, the marriage, the marriage,
With love and mo bouchal for me:
The ladies that ride in a carriage
Might envy my marriage to me.’

Then she was laughingly carried off to join in another dance.

I joined in the fun till midnight; then, though the merriment was still at its height, I quietly left the house and hastened home. As I left the cabin I stumbled across a figure which was hiding behind a turf-stack. By the light of my burning turf I recognised the features of Owen Macgrath. He slunk away when he saw me, and never since that night has he been seen in Storport.

A Tourist's Notes.

BARBISON, October 12, 1878.

THIS is the Forest of Fontainebleau :

Alleys where green leaves linger yet
Catch the lights as they come and go ;
Bark of birch shines out as snow,
Against red wild cherries and rocks like jet :
Fair is the Forest of Fontainebleau.

Fair was the Forest of Fontainebleau

When Diane of Poitiers hunted here ;
Art has feigned her on foot with bow,
But she rode a swift-paced jennet, I trow,
To follow the hounds that pulled down the deer
In her lover's Forest of Fontainebleau.

How still is the Forest of Fontainebleau !

Hushed is the sound of the hunter's horn ;
Only the leaves which the breezes strow
Gently rustle our feet below,
Down the forest this autumn morn,
Down the fair Forest of Fontainebleau.

To-day in the Forest of Fontainebleau

The past is naught and the future vain :
The years will come, with their ebb and flow ;
But whether they bring us joy or woe,
To-day is sunshine—to live is gain
In the fair still Forest of Fontainebleau.

The Story of a Statue.¹

On a bright summer's afternoon, many years ago, I was sitting in the middle of my garden, when my servant roused me from my reverie by presenting me with a letter. The handwriting told me at once that it came from my old friend Dr. Mortimer, who was then living near Rome. He and I had established at college a close friendship for each other which had lasted ever since, partly on account of that unknown bond of sympathy which draws two people together, and partly from our similarity of tastes, for we were both quiet, unambitious men, fond of literature and art, but without sufficient character to succeed in either. We began life differently: I worked steadily for the bar, while my friend prepared himself for medicine. Shortly, however, after our departure from college, Dr. Mortimer came into the possession of a considerable fortune, and he had by that time acquired such a passion for pictures, sculpture, and works of art, that he determined to leave the country in order to collect as many beautiful objects as he could. I for my part was no less lucky, for the death of an aunt made me a rich man. Accordingly, I purchased a small but pretty little cottage at about twenty miles from London, and there in seclusion I passed my time with the sole company of my books and my flowers. Dr. Mortimer and I corresponded with each other from time to time, but we had not met for many years when I received the letter of which I have spoken.

The letter contained a pressing invitation from my friend to pay him a visit at his house in Rome, and he begged me to come down there without further delay. He told me that he longed to see me again and talk over old times, but that he particularly wished me to be with him just now, as he had reason to suppose that some very old pieces of sculpture were buried in his grounds, and that their exhumation would be most interesting to us both. I determined to go at once, and, having packed up what was necessary, took the train to London, and arrived at Charing Cross in time to catch the night mail.

Though, as I have said, fifteen years have elapsed since I took this journey, I can remember every incident connected with it as if it had been yesterday. The excitement of packing had at first so occupied my attention that I had thought of little else

¹ Adapted from the French of Prosper Mérimée.

but my portmanteau ; but when I was once fairly off from Charing Cross, I felt a strange longing to go back again. I could not understand what this meant, it seemed to me so strange and unmanly ; but do what I would, I found it impossible to shake off the impression that I should never live again amidst my books in my old happy and contented condition. Two or three times I had serious thoughts of telegraphing to Dr. Mortimer, telling him not to expect me ; but the thought that he might feel hurt kept me from a step which would to heaven I had taken. On arriving at Rome, however, the thought of seeing my old friend once more drove these gloomy sensations from my mind ; and when finally I drove up to his house, and found him standing at the gate waiting to welcome me, you may readily imagine how warm were our greetings. He led me into his garden, where we sat down for a long time talking over all our affairs and of our old college days. Dr. Mortimer then took me over his house, and showed me all the treasures which it contained. Beautiful indeed they were. Every room contained some exquisite works of art, and the whole collection was arranged in the most perfect taste.

The house itself was extremely pretty and well-situated, commanding a charming view of the surrounding country. It consisted of two stories, the drawing-room and sitting-room being on the ground-floor on either side of a picturesque little door, built in the English style. The windows of these rooms looked out upon a beautifully-kept lawn, which was surrounded on either side by shrubs and flowers, and which terminated in a little circular arbour, with graceful Italian pillars supporting a dome. I could see into the interior of this little building from the sitting-room of the house, and observed that it was elegantly decorated, and that a pedestal was placed on the floor. The Doctor saw that I had noticed this, and said, ' You are wondering what that is for ! Well, the fact is, that while digging the other day in a part of my grounds which lies beyond the arbour, I came upon something which I am certain is a large statue. I waited for your arrival before proceeding with the work ; and I propose that this afternoon we go down there together, and, with the assistance of one or two workmen whom I have engaged, endeavour to find out what it is. If the statue should prove a good one, I intend to put it up in the arbour.'

It was certainly strange, but a mysterious feeling of repugnance for this work seized me, and it was the more remarkable as the sensation seemed to me similar to that which I had experienced in the train. The Doctor, however, was so enthusiastic about his expected discovery that I could not refuse to take upon myself a

share of the labour. Accordingly, after a light meal, I sauntered forth with Dr. Mortimer to the field where the statue lay buried.

‘So you are still a bachelor?’ said the Doctor, lighting a cigar.

‘Yes,’ replied I; ‘I live a secluded life, and have grown so fond of my books that I think little of women. Indeed, I scarcely ever see one. But you, too, are unmarried.’

‘Why, yes; you care for books, I worship Art. I am married to Art; and if any woman were to consent to be my wife, she would have to put up with a second place in my affections. But you used to be susceptible enough in the old days. I wonder you have not yet been bitten. I for my part do not care for women.’

I smiled and said, ‘I cannot agree with you there. I worship women in the abstract, though I have as yet not met one who suits my fancy. If I could fall in love, I think I should love deeply.’

Dr. Mortimer burst into a loud laugh. ‘Well, take care, that’s all,’ said he, ‘and don’t make a fool of yourself.’

By this time we had reached the spot where all my friend’s hopes were concentrated. It was a large open field about three miles from Rome. The weather was extremely hot, and the sun was shining brilliantly upon the magnificent ruins which appeared in the distance. Two Italian labourers were there awaiting our arrival, and some spades and other implements were lying beside them.

The Doctor was eager to begin work, and flinging off his coat he seized a spade and began to dig with great energy. The two men assisted him, while I took up a spade mechanically, and watched the proceedings. At length I saw them gradually uncover something shining like bronze, which had the appearance of part of a woman’s dress. Mortimer hailed this discovery with a loud shout of ‘Eureka!’ and began to urge me to join in the work. His bald head was shining in the sun, and his good-natured face beamed upon me from behind his spectacles in so winning a manner, that I was compelled to take off my coat and plunge desperately into the work. From time to time the Doctor was obliged to rest in order to wipe the perspiration from his brow, when he would tell us a story of the great masters, or of some celebrated picture; then he would cheer on the men, and begin again himself. At last, after about three or four hours’ digging, we succeeded in removing the earth from what was evidently the trunk and limbs of a colossal statue of a woman. We were all now so fatigued by our labour that we were compelled to stop, though the head of the figure still remained concealed

under the soil. The Doctor, accordingly, gave some money to the two labourers, who seemed highly pleased with his generosity; and after bidding us good-night they left us to examine the result of our labours.

The Doctor had seated himself upon a stone which we had come upon during our work, while I stood silently contemplating the statue. I was gazing upon the bronze figure of a woman about seven feet in height, but so well proportioned that the whole seemed perfectly natural. She was clad in a loose garment, which was drawn in at the waist by a girdle, and which was made to fall in seductive folds and wrinkles about her person, partly concealing and partly exposing the beauty of her limbs. One of the arms reclined upon her breast, while the other drooped languidly before her. But, in spite of these exquisite points, a certain indescribable mocking coquetry pervaded the whole figure. The more I looked upon this singular piece of art, the more I seemed to admire it. I even wished to kneel down and kiss the figure, when the pleasant voice of the Doctor aroused me and made me turn towards him. He was looking at the statue with the eye of a connoisseur. 'It is perfect!' he exclaimed. 'What a miracle of art! It must be the work of some great Greek master. Look at that hand; observe the delicacy of the feet, the exquisite grace of the bust. What marvellous execution,—what design! But what can the face of so lovely a figure be like?'

'Ay, what indeed!' said I with a shudder.

We sat down together side by side upon the stone, in silence, until it was growing dusk.

'Let us go on no further with this work,' said I suddenly. 'We have seen enough; and besides, after all, we may be disappointed in the end.'

'What!' said Dr. Mortimer rather testily, 'give up when we have gone so far! What is the matter with you to-day? I cannot make you out. Have you fallen in love with the statue, or what is it?'

'I really beg your pardon—I didn't know what I was saying.'

'Oh, you are tired now. Come in-doors, let us wash and dress and have some food, and a pleasant chat afterwards. To-morrow you will feel quite fresh, and we can renew our labours with redoubled energy.'

We accordingly left the field and returned to the house. At dinner the Doctor was in high spirits; he ate and drank heartily, and talked in raptures about his discovery. I for my part had no appetite, and was unable to join in the conversation, for my thoughts were full of the strange statue. After dinner, the night

being fine, we sat together in the garden silently smoking our cigars. At last I spoke.

'Would you like to go down again to the field, and have another look at the statue?'

'Of all things in the world,' said the Doctor. 'I know what I should like to do; only I am afraid you are too tired for that. I should like to finish off the work now. I am sure it would not take much more than an hour, or less, if we worked hard.'

'Oh, yes,' said I. 'I should be very glad to assist you. I am not tired now, and I think I really should enjoy it.'

'Would you, indeed? How good of you! Well then, come along, for the sooner we set about it the better.'

After putting on some suitable clothing we walked down together to the field which contained the Doctor's treasure. It was a lovely night. There was scarcely a breath of wind in the air. The moon was well up, and covered the distant view of Rome with a soft white light, and the country round was visible for miles. We paused before the kind of grave which we had dug in the afternoon. There lay the statue as we had left her. She was looking exquisitely beautiful, her dress glistening in the moonlight. I was the first this time to seize a spade. The Doctor soon joined me, and we worked so energetically that, as he had predicted, in little short of an hour our task was done.

I rose to look at the face, but started back with horror as I first caught sight of her glance fixed upon me, and remained for some time rooted to the spot. Her penetrating eyes were turned towards me, and seemed to look me through and through. Her hair was hanging loosely down her back; some of it lay clustered upon her bosom, but the whole was so arranged as to exhibit the beauty and delicacy of her neck and throat. The head was shaped to perfection, but the face, handsome though it certainly was, had been worked by the artist into the expression which had given me such a shock. It was a mixture of pride, disdain, and spite. The face which was now revealed was, in fact, the complement of the figure which I had seen in the afternoon, and I could now account for the malignity which I had then observed in the position of the limbs. It was grand in a way, this statue, but it was terrible, and yet to me strangely fascinating.

Dr. Mortimer expressed himself as much pleased with the face as he had been with the figure of the statue, and pronounced it to be everything in Art which it ought to be. 'Just like a woman, too,' he said; 'not too angelic, as some statues are; nor too sentimental, like so many of our modern works.' And then again he

delivered himself of a panegyric upon the numerous excellences of the statue.

‘But did you not notice a very strange expression, something almost repulsive even, about the face?’ said I, as we lighted our cigars, on our way home.

‘No, I can’t say I did,’ said he. ‘It certainly is not altogether a pleasant face, now I come to think of it.’

I took the Doctor’s arm, and we went for a stroll about the garden before parting for the night. When I reached my bedroom, which was at the back of the house, I opened the window, and looked out upon the view. I was very restless, and felt a strange longing to go down again to the statue. I flung myself upon the bed, and tried to sleep, but I could not. At length I got up, crept softly down the stairs, and went forth alone. I soon reached the field, and found the statue as we had left it, and yet not exactly as we had left it; and that is what seemed to me so strange. I do not think I could have pointed out the change to anyone; I was unable to detect any alteration in the position of the figure, or in the shape of the features, but the expression of the face was not the same. Her look was still cold and mocking, but she almost seemed to smile at me. I stood watching her for a long time. Her beautifully rounded knees were shining, and a pale sparkle came from each fold of her dress. At last the silver light of the moon fell so sweetly upon her face and her bosom, that I felt a thrill of pleasure. ‘If she but lived!’ cried I, and I knelt down beside her, and gently kissed her forehead, and gazed at her beauty. ‘What folly!’ at last I exclaimed, and hastily raising myself I began to hurry home. But I could not resist the temptation to turn back once more to take another look at the statue. Her eyes were upon me, and the old horrible expression was upon her face, the same look of scorn. I turned quickly and ran home, threw myself upon the bed, and, being now thoroughly tired out, soon sank into a heavy sleep.

I was aroused next morning by the cheery voice of my friend. ‘I did not like to disturb you before, as I knew you wanted a good rest after your heavy work yesterday; but you will be losing the beauty of the day if you sleep any longer. Besides, I have made all the necessary arrangements for moving the statue; so come and have a cup of coffee, and we will go down together at once.’

I got up immediately, and speedily dressed myself, and after drinking some coffee, the Doctor and I walked down together to the field. Three Italian men were there, two of them our old friends of the previous day, and the third a big, brawny-looking fellow, admirably suited for the work which we had in hand. He

was evidently rather struck with the statue, for I found him caressing it familiarly. 'Ah, signora,' said he, 'you are beautiful, but you are very horrible, and I would not take you at a gift.' I could scarcely endure to see this coarse labourer touch the statue and address her thus.

We all now set to work to raise the image. It was very heavy, and the same Italian whom I discovered talking to the figure went to one part of it in order to apply a lever; and, as he found some difficulty in doing this, he began half playfully, half in anger, to swear at it. Soon, however, we began to lift it up, but at that moment the Italian missed his footing and slipped down on the ground. The statue rolled out of our grasp, and, eluding all our efforts to hold it, fell heavily upon him. After some trouble, we managed to lift it off him. The poor man was in great pain; in fact, Dr. Mortimer found on making an examination that his leg was broken. On hearing this opinion I turned round, and observed the expression which I had noticed before on the statue's face.

We carried the Italian into the house, where the Doctor set his leg, and did for him all that is necessary in such cases. The next day we finished our work, and succeeded in hoisting up the statue upon the pedestal which stood in the midst of Dr. Mortimer's arbour.

I spent the next fortnight in watching it, and indeed I was capable of little else. Day by day I grew more fascinated and enthralled by the marvellous beauty of her figure, and her countenance seemed to me to be mellowing into sweetness. Her face was never a gentle one, but still there was an indescribable charm about it. I mentioned this change which I had perceived in the statue's face to Dr. Mortimer, who said, quite delighted, 'Why, you have the true spirit of an artist. All great works change to an imaginative eye. Examine a Madonna of Raphael, a head of Guido, one of the great pieces of sculpture, or what you will that is really a gem, and you will find that they vary with each inspection.'

'And yet in this instance there seemed to be something more than that.'

The Doctor then began a lecture upon Art, but while he was speaking I recognised that the two Italian labourers whom we had employed were lurking in the back of the garden.

'Curse you!' I heard one of them say, as he looked into the arbour, 'you have bewitched my friend and broken his leg;' and he hurled a stone at the figure, which struck it with a ringing noise, and then rebounded and hit the man in the forehead.

The Doctor started up, and I remember noticing once more that the old scornful look had returned to the statue. Much alarmed, I rose and joined the Doctor. The man was in great pain, but he was not seriously hurt. Dr. Mortimer was exceedingly angry, and indignantly exclaimed that 'the man had been served quite right, and that it would be a lesson to him not to commit such an act of vandalism again.' When we came back, the statue seemed to be smiling upon us as before.

A few days after this there arrived at the Doctor's house two young people who were engaged to be married. Dr. Mortimer had an orphan niece, Alice Fearnley, who was a great favourite of his. Ever since the death of her parents, the Doctor had taken the place of a father to her, and she had passed the greater part of her life at his house. She had lately been on a visit to some friends in England, and had met there a young man of good family, named Frank Grove, who had fallen in love with her. He was so much smitten by the Doctor's pretty niece that he had followed her on her way back home, and the two had become engaged. The Doctor fully approved of the match, as he had heard nothing but good of the young man, and, moreover, he knew something about him himself, and liked him. It was his great wish that the marriage should take place from his house; and as the two lovers wished to be married as quietly as possible, and as they had nowhere else to go to out of England, they were only too glad to avail themselves of the Doctor's kindness. I was very much pleased with both of them, and the time passed pleasantly enough after their arrival. Young Grove was a man of fortune, handsome, pleasant, merry, popular with everyone, and a thorough gentleman. Alice was one of the sweetest girls I have ever seen. She had light hair, and bright blue eyes, and was excessively pretty. She was a thorough English girl, with the look of being a useful beauty - a girl, in fact, who was to become a wife and a mother. We two elder folks walked about and talked together, or read the papers, while the two young ones wandered alone, perfectly happy in each other's company.

But in spite of these attractions I could not dismiss my strange fascination for the statue, and I lost no opportunity of going alone into the arbour and sitting before it. I wondered how I could ever have thought ill of her face, it seemed now to be so charming. One afternoon when I was in the arbour, the statue was looking particularly lovely. At last I fancied that she moved, that her arms were inviting me to go to her, and her lips seemed to be seductively pressed together as if to kiss me. My whole frame shook with delight as I rushed forward to clasp her passionately,

and I kissed her a hundred times. I remained thus for some time, but I durst not look up. I seemed to be clinging to a loadstone. After an effort I broke away from her, and perceived that she was looking down upon me with her old scornful and horrible expression. I rushed off into the garden.

‘Why, what is the matter with you? How pale you look!’ said Frank Grove, who stopped me in my course. ‘I am afraid you are not well.’

‘Oh, it is nothing; do I look excited? I am quite well.’

‘Well! will you come down with me into the town, and help me to choose a ring? It is my wedding ring, for you know Alice and I are to be married in a few days.’

I was glad to accompany him as a relief to my mind, and his agreeable conversation soon made me feel myself again. We did not find much difficulty in getting a ring suitable for Frank’s purpose.

After dinner that night, the weather was so fine that we all went out into the garden. The Doctor and I sat on a luxurious seat with our cigars, while Frank and Alice lay on the grass at our feet. How happy they were! and how pleased the Doctor was to see them so, as he smiled upon them and turned round every now and then to me with a good-humoured twinkle in his eye, when they were especially tender with each other. But I could not feel happy—I looked up, and saw the great statue, with its bitter mocking face, looking down contemptuously upon the group which we formed.

It was now the last day of Frank’s unmarried life. The Doctor and Alice had gone off for a walk together, and I went out with a book into the garden. The weather had quite changed, and was looking very gloomy. In the midst of my meditations Frank came running in upon me.

‘Come up with me a moment into the arbour,’ said he; ‘I want to speak to you about something very important.’

I had a great aversion from that place ever since my last interview with the statue, so I proposed that we should go into the house.

‘No, not there, please,’ said he; ‘I am afraid of meeting Dr. Mortimer and Alice coming in from their stroll, by the back door.’ We entered the arbour together, and I saw the statue was looking down upon us with her sickly smile.

‘The fact is,’ burst out my young friend, ‘I have had a quarrel with one of those fiery Italians, and he insists upon a duel. I could thrash the fellow easily enough, but I must fight him in a different way. He is waiting for me in the field behind here. Now,

I want you to be my second, and to come with me and get the affair over before Alice comes back. Poor girl, she would be frightened to death if she thought I was going to fight a duel. But there is no danger.'

I tried to remonstrate with him, but he had already taken off his coat, and, as he did so, the ring which he had bought for Alice dropped out of the pocket and rolled along the floor to the foot of the statue. He picked it up hastily. 'What shall I do with this? Oh, bother! Here, my lady,' said he, addressing the statue; 'you shall keep it for me,' and he put it on one of her fingers.

'Great God! what are you about?' exclaimed I, horrified.

'What! are you superstitious? But come along, there is no time to lose.'

I was determined to try and stop this absurd fight if possible, but my friend's adversary was making such a fuss about his 'revenge,' as he called it, that all my efforts were in vain.

Two rapiers were produced, and the combatants put themselves in position. In a few minutes, to my great relief, Frank succeeded in jerking the Italian's weapon from out of his hand.

'There,' said he, 'I am the victor. Now, one thing alone I ask of you; that is, that you take yourself off as quickly as you can, and say nothing to anybody about this affair.'

The Italian somewhat sulkily obeyed, while I rushed up to congratulate my friend. 'Oh, I knew I could beat him; besides, I was cool, and he was not. But will you be so good as to go to the house, and if you meet Alice and the Doctor, keep them occupied, while I go to fetch my coat, which I left in the harbour. I want them to know nothing of this silly business.'

I did so, and on passing through the house found Alice just coming in from her walk. She was leaning on the Doctor's arm, who kissed her most affectionately as I came up to them. We went into the back room, and she took off her hat and cloak.

'Where is Frank?' said the Doctor. 'Do you know? We were just going to look for him.'

'Oh, he will be back directly. I have only left him a minute since. I hope you have had a pleasant walk? The weather looks threatening, but I think it will clear off by to-morrow.'

'Oh, I hope so,' said the Doctor, 'but it certainly is getting very gloomy. We saw some heavy clouds coming up in the distance. I am afraid a storm is brewing; and when it does rain here, we get it in earnest.'

I wondered why Frank was so long, but we had waited for more than an hour for him, and now thick drops of rain were descending.

Dr. Mortimer began to grow impatient, and Alice seemed so anxious that I put on an overcoat and went out to look for him.

I called out, but he was not in the harbour, nor could I find him anywhere about the premises. I was seriously alarmed for his safety, and began to suspect some foul play on the part of the Italian with whom he had fought. How everything went wrong in this house! I wished that Frank and Alice were safely married and were on their honeymoon together, and that I was home again, far from these mysterious influences. I was so depressed that I could not conceal my distress of mind when I came back to tell the Doctor and Alice of the failure of my search. Poor Alice was dreadfully nervous and excited, but after two hours of painful waiting we were all relieved to see Frank's figure stepping across the garden. Alice sprang to the door to meet him, and embraced him passionately as he entered. 'Oh, Frank dear!' she exclaimed, 'where have you been? We were all so anxious about you.'

'But how silly of you, dear,' said he. 'I have only just been down to the town upon some business, and got caught in a shower.' And he affectionately returned her embraces.

I was surprised and moved, when I observed how pale and strange he looked. His manner was excited, and he seemed to be oppressed by some trying thoughts; and as I looked up, I was startled to catch the face of the statue looking down upon them with its scornful mockery.

When we were all in the drawing-room again, Alice, like a true woman, began to scold her young lover; but when she noticed his altered appearance she fondly caressed him, and begged him to tell her what it was that distressed him so much.

'Oh, indeed,' said he, smiling upon her, 'I am all right, and very happy. I was perhaps a little depressed when I came in. I dare say because I was wet through.'

'Oh, I am so glad there is nothing really. But go up-stairs and change your things at once, or you will catch your death of cold.'

The Doctor of course seconded this wise appeal, and as it was now time to dress for dinner we all went up-stairs.

Dinner passed off very heavily. Dr. Mortimer talked a great deal, but poor Frank was evidently suffering. He ate nothing, his manner was restless, and every now and then he looked sadly upon Alice. She tried her best to brighten the conversation and to amuse him, but it was of no use. I could see that two or three times the poor girl was on the point of bursting into tears.

The Doctor did not perceive that anything was amiss, and after

dinner he drew me off into a separate room where he had just put up a new picture.

‘The young people, I am sure, would like to be together,’ said he; ‘and we old ones can smoke and have our coffee here.’

‘Did you not notice how odd in his manner Frank was this evening?’ said I, lighting a cigar. ‘There is something the matter with him, I am certain.’

‘Perhaps he is tired; and then, you know, he is on the eve of taking a most important step in life,’ said the Doctor sententiously, and he looked very grave behind his cigar. ‘However, if there really is anything the matter with him, leave her to ferret it out.’

We smoked on and talked till bed-time. It was raining very hard outside, and the wind was high, but the night was so dark that we could see nothing but a black mass through the windows. We found Frank and Alice in the drawing-room together. Alice was playing some pretty little melodies on the piano, and her lover was kneeling beside her with one arm round her waist. His face was intensely sad, and he was apparently buried in thought.

Alice immediately got up, and after a slight conversation she wished the doctor and Frank good-night. When she came to me, she pressed my hand and whispered, ‘I am sure poor Frank is unhappy about something; do try and find out what it is. Good-night!’

I promised to do all in my power, and the Doctor then going to bed, Frank and I were left alone together.

‘Oh, I am so glad we are alone,’ said he. ‘I have wanted to speak to you all the evening. Do not laugh at what I am going to tell you, but it has affected me in a most mysterious manner.’ After a few minutes’ pause, he continued:—‘Well, when you left me this morning, I went into the arbour for my coat; I picked it up, and put it on, when suddenly I remembered that I had left Alice’s ring on one of the statue’s fingers. I turned round to take it off, but to my horror the finger had closed upon it. I could scarcely believe my own eyes. I tugged, and pulled again, but it was of no use. I could not break the finger off, and get it so, for fear of spoiling Dr. Mortimer’s favourite work of art.’

‘How strange!’ cried I. ‘Let us go down together at once, and get the ring off somehow or other. I will tell the Doctor, in fact.’

‘No, no, not on any account; it would alarm Alice, who would be sure to hear of it. But I must tell you all. I was thinking of what to do, when I became aware that the statue was looking down upon me with a dreadful expression of malignant triumph.’

I felt excessively interested when I heard this, and begged him to proceed.

‘Well, I remained for some time perfectly horrified; it seemed like some fearful nightmare. At last I could not bear to stop any longer by this strange statue, and I rushed away. The rain was coming down in torrents. I did not dare to enter the harbour again, and so I ran wildly into the town and bought another ring. You may think it very foolish to be put out so much—indeed, I think so myself—but the scene has made a deep impression upon me.’

I consoled him as much as I was able, but I did not think it wise at such a time to make him acquainted with all my experiences of the statue. I bade him try and sleep it off. ‘You have a trying day to-morrow,’ said I. ‘And your wife will never forgive you if you look depressed upon your wedding day.’

‘True! true! But is she not charming? Dear girl! would we were married, and well off on our journey. Good-night! Thanks for listening to me so kindly. You will find me a different man to-morrow, depend upon it.’

Though I had made light of the matter to Frank, his tale filled me with the gravest apprehensions. I tried to persuade myself into the belief that, after all, what he had told me was only a coincidence. Ah! poor man, I certainly agreed with him in wishing his marriage happily over, for I experienced a strange foreboding of evil, and passed a troubled night.

It was now the wedding morning of my two young friends. Not a cheerful day, to be sure, though the rain had partially cleared off, but there were signs of an approaching storm in the heavens. A faint gleam of sun shone upon us, but all the horizon was as black as night. Alice came down blushing, dressed in a simple white dress. She rushed into her uncle’s arms, who kissed her affectionately, with tears in his eyes. She then came to me and held out her hand, and allowed me to kiss her forehead. Frank of course embraced her with great tenderness. It was a touching sight.

I still, however, felt uneasy in my mind. Frank, I could see, was suffering, but he bore up bravely, and no one, I think, noticed the state of his feelings but myself. We went down to the church, which was only a short distance from the house; the Doctor, supporting Alice on his arm, going first, and Frank and I following behind. I pressed his hand. He walked along in silence, his eyes fixed upon the ground. During the ceremony he was calm, and I think that, though Alice looked sad, she did not perceive anything unusual in him. In half an hour they were married, and then we

all hurried home as fast as we could, for the rain was coming down heavily.

As we sat down to the wedding meal, a terrific storm broke out with frequent flashes of lightning, followed by peals of thunder. Poor Alice was quite frightened.

‘How unfortunate this is!’ exclaimed Frank.

‘Of course, travelling now is out of the question,’ said the Doctor. ‘I can put you both up. You must make yourselves happy here, and postpone your journey at least till to-morrow.’

‘You are very kind,’ said Frank with great excitement. ‘But we must go to-day, indeed we must.’

‘Oh, Frank, but it is such dreadful weather,’ said Alice.

‘Yes, darling. I know. It is very unkind of me, but I have a reason for what I say. I cannot explain now, but we must not delay any longer.’

‘Very well, darling,’ said she, kissing him. ‘I am ready to go with you.’

‘No, I won’t have it,’ said the Doctor. ‘Frank, what are you thinking of! She would catch a cold that would kill her. Why, the thing is absurd; and, besides I should like to know where you are to get a carriage and horses such a fearful afternoon as this; and still more, anyone fool enough to take you. No! don’t be obstinate. Have a quiet dinner here. You and your wife shall have the best room in the house; and to-morrow, or if necessary the next day, you can go. But to-day you shall not, so say no more about it.’

The weather was so wild that at last Frank was persuaded to stay, and the Doctor made himself so agreeable that after dinner, as we all sat together in the drawing-room, even Frank seemed to have lost all his gloom. When it grew late, Alice left us.

The Doctor went to bed soon after her departure, and Frank took up his candle.

‘Good night,’ I said, shaking him warmly by the hand. He was very pale, and his hand trembled.

‘Good night,’ he replied. ‘I ought now to be in the best of spirits; but all that strange feeling of dread has come over me. Oh, what can it mean! But how silly! Good night.’

I went up into my room feeling gloomy enough, lighted a cigar, and looked out upon the night. My room was at the back of the house, and I saw that the storm had somewhat abated, though the rain was still descending in torrents. Some of the black clouds were beginning to open a little, and to reveal as they separated a small space of pale light. Occasionally I could catch a few glimpses of the moon. Every now and then a flash of lightning

burst out, followed after some interval by a long rolling peal of thunder which gradually died out in echoes. I looked out upon this dismal scene and thought of poor Frank, wondering what could be the meaning of the deep anxiety which I felt for him. While I was thus occupied, I became conscious of a cold, weird sensation creeping over me. I wished to call out, but I dared not speak or look round. It seemed to me as if the front door of the house was being opened. A terrific flash of lightning now lit up the country for miles. It was very horrible. I waited for the thunder. It began low, then it became louder, then it faded away in rolling noises. And yet there was a sound which was not the thunder; it was inside the house; it was a steady series of clamping noises, as of something heavy ascending the stairs. I tried to persuade myself that it was the thunder, but I knew it was not. A dead silence followed, during which I remained paralyzed with fear. I thought I heard a groan, then there was the clamping noise again, now going down the stairs. But a loud clap of thunder drowned the sound, and I could distinguish nothing. There was again a momentary silence, followed by a shrill piercing scream which filled the whole house. I could not mistake this—it was the voice of a woman. I rushed out of my room, and met Alice in her night-dress and with her hair loose coming along the passage. 'He is dead; good God! he is dead,' she cried, and flung herself into Dr. Mortimer's arms, who had at that moment come out from his room to see what was the matter. I went into her bedroom, and found, to my horror, the body of Frank Grove lying on the bed, perfectly dead, with the marks of rust all over his person.

It was a terrible scene. We tried to soothe the poor girl, but she seemed to be in a state of abject terror, and looked like one who had experienced a great shock. At last we succeeded in getting a room ready for her, and the Doctor administered a draught which sent her to sleep for a while. On revisiting the fatal room with the Doctor we were both surprised to see no blood upon the figure, nor marks of violence. He appeared to have met death by suffocation.

Dr. Mortimer was much moved when he discovered that Frank was in reality dead. After an interval he asked me if I had any clue which might give an idea of the cause of his death. 'We must lose no time,' said he, 'in putting the matter into the hands of the proper authorities.' I told him the story of the duel, and was about to tell him all my thoughts, when a servant informed us that poor Alice wished to speak with us. We went together, consequently, into the room where she had been conveyed.

She had heard that the Doctor was on the point of putting the whole affair into the hands of the police, in order to discover how it was that poor Frank had met with his end. She begged him not to do so, at least until she had made an important disclosure. She was still very weak and pale. We propped her up with pillows, and implored her to say nothing now unless she felt quite equal to it. She smiled, and said that she had courage to do so, and asked us to listen attentively to her story. She spoke as follows.

‘When I reached my room last night, I sat up for a long time, thinking of Frank, and wondering why he was so unhappy. I knew he loved me, he was so kind and gentle, but there was something on his mind which he was keeping from me. It was very wrong of him. But he would soon be here, I thought, to fold me in his arms as his own wife, and then he would tell me all. At last I summoned up courage to blow out my candle, and as I was stepping into bed was startled by a tremendous peal of thunder. After a few minutes I became aware of a strange feeling which made me tremble from head to foot. I wished to scream, but I could not; I was dumb with fright. I shrank into a corner of the bed, scarcely daring to breathe. Someone had opened the door, and I knew it was not my husband. There was a great cold thing in my bed. Still I could not call out.’ Here she paused a minute, quite overcome by her recollections. We begged her to renew her story another time, but she wished to finish it now. She continued, ‘I shrank farther towards the edge of the bed, when the door opened, and I heard my husband’s voice. “My own darling!” he said, and I turned round. There was a great black figure in the bed. I heard a sort of mocking laugh, and saw two immense arms closing round something; then came a moaning, and then silence. I covered my face with my hands, and tried to collect my thoughts. The thunder was pealing, when by an effort I shook off my fear, and moved to clasp my husband to me. He was dead in my arms. Then it was that you heard my screams.’ And the poor girl, as she murmured these words, fell back quite exhausted.

The Doctor attended to her, and I left the room as gently as possible. The moment I was outside, a strange impulse took possession of me. I seized a lantern, rushed out of doors, crossed the garden, and entered the arbour. It was now nearly morning: the storm was almost over. The statue was certainly there in its usual place, and there was no appearance of its having been moved in any way. But the expression of the face was diabolical; it was a look of malicious pleasure mingled with bitter scorn. I raised my lantern. There were marks of blood upon her, and the finger

was now unbent, and pointed to the ring which lay upon the floor beneath.

I sank upon a seat completely cowed. I wiped my forehead, and fell into a profound reverie. On awaking I was attracted by something at the lower part of the figure which I had not noticed before. I approached the statue, and found that it was an inscription written in faded Greek characters.

With difficulty I made out its meaning as follows :—

Here stands the cruel woman, false as fair,
Who ruined my life and filled me with care.
Her spirit still breathes, thus raised by my art,
So gaze not upon her, nor yield her thy heart.
Dare not to strike her, or do her some harm,
For she can avenge thee : so works the charm.
Evil awaits him who dares to deride,
Doomed is the lover who makes her his bride.

Then came a name which I could not decipher, and which was, I suppose, the name of the artist.

I dropped my lantern. The early sun shone upon her scornful face.

‘So, then,’ I cried, ‘you *are* the cause of all these miseries. It is as I expected. It is you who have killed a noble man, and destroyed the happiness of his sweet bride. The malignant spirit of some fiendish woman lurks within you. You bear a charm, then. I will destroy it ;’ and I struck at the statue with all my force, and fell down exhausted at her feet.

I suffered excruciating pain from the force of the blow, but the statue was not destroyed, and stood exulting over me with a mocking sneer. I got up, and tried to raise my arm. I could not do so. It was paralysed. I walked back to the house. When I had gained the door-step I met Dr. Mortimer. He was weeping bitterly. ‘Poor child, poor child !’ he said ; ‘the shock has killed her—she is dead.’

It was a fortnight after the night of these events, when the Doctor and I were sitting in the drawing-room together. We had been talking for some time, when he said, ‘It is certainly a marvellous story. But one thing I have determined to do, and that is to destroy this fearful statue. I intend, in fact, to have it removed to-day by some workmen, and taken to a smelting furnace, where it shall be melted down.’ I fully agreed to this proposal, and the statue was accordingly removed, and the bronze of which it was composed was afterwards cast into a bell. Dr. Mortimer then sold his house, and went to reside in the South of France. He

has grown very grave, and dislikes being reminded of his Italian days; and though he still venerates Art, he never will be persuaded to purchase a statue upon any consideration whatever.

I made some inquiries about the bell, many years afterwards, when I revisited Rome. It had been apparently very little used, for it had never been tolled except to usher in some great calamity. At last the feeling became so strong against it that it was cut down, sent to the sea-shore, and then cast into the sea by some fishermen. A disastrous wreck was reported to have occurred soon afterwards on the very spot where the bell had been thrown. I heard no more of it after this. I am now living in my own little cottage near London. My right arm is still completely paralysed; and a friend has kindly written out these papers from my dictation. My spirits are completely gone; and it seems as if I never shall forget the fatal beauty of that mystic statue, nor the terrible events of that fearful night.

C. TREVELYAN MACAULAY.

Donna Quirote.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

CHAPTER X.

FIELDING GOES A-VISITING.

MR. FIELDING was undoubtedly a man of irregular habits. It would, perhaps, not be incorrect to say that he was irregular on system; irregular as a matter of regularity. He flattered himself that he was one of the few men ever found in the world at one time who have really made up their minds as to what the world is worth to them. If he had a sort of principle in the matter, or had invented one to excuse his personal peculiarities, it was that man is of his own nature, and when let alone, an infinitely better sort of creature than he can be made by merely conforming to the ways of other people. He excused himself, accordingly, for doing exactly as he felt inclined by the argument that any man, if left to himself, will be found a much better fellow than some other man can coerce him to be. Fielding rose and went to bed, therefore, at any hour of the day or night that suited his humour. Some nights he did not choose to go to bed at all. He read half the night and slept half the day, or did not sleep any part of that day, just as the whim took him. He sought out company when he was in the mood, and he kept away from it when he was not. When in the humour for company he could talk to anyone, and make himself happy with anyone. He had no great opinion of himself; and he was convinced that even when he did a generous thing, it was simply because it pleased him. 'It gives me more pleasure to make a present of that five-pound note than to keep it,' he would say; 'I like the sensation of giving; if I didn't, I wouldn't give. I have thrown away money at Baden-Baden in the old days, and at Monaco, and on the Mississippi boats, for the pleasure of trying my luck. It isn't a worse way of buying amusement than many another. But I find more pleasure sometimes in giving money away; what merit is there in that?'

The morning after the concert he was up rather early. He was restless, and did not feel in the mood for turning to anything in particular. He fancied nothing would do him more good than a long ramble alone into the country, and he thought of going up the river a certain distance in one of the boats, and then getting

out and wandering away along by the banks as far as he pleased. He could either return to town that night or not ; or never again, exactly as the humour took him. It was spring, and he thought with a yearning of the budding trees along the river ; of the smoke curling up grey against the pale spring sky from cottage-roofs ; of canals and towing-paths, and the slow horses heavily tugging at the lazy load ; of delightful English downs with long, low, red-brick houses and antique weathercocks and rooks flying round ; of sunlight flickering through the yet unclothed boughs ; of boyish holidays, especially of Saturdays. He began to think it would be delightful to keep a lock on the Thames and lie on the grass and do nothing until a boat came up, and then, swinging open the great gate of the lock, to watch the boat as it shot through or dragged heavily through. Or a travelling tinker, he thought, must have a glorious life : slouching along through villages, and having a chat with everybody and doing a bit of work here and there, and sleeping in barns now and then, or, when the weather was very fine, lying down under the open sky and seeing the stars begin to flicker and dance about over his head as he was dropping asleep. Such a fellow would want for nothing and would be welcome everywhere. He would bring news from place to place, and get the gossip of one village to carry on to another. He would come now and then to some fine old historic city, with a cathedral or a castle, but with the open country and the river seen from every one of its streets : and there he would spend a day or two before wandering off on his travels again.

Any manner of wandering seemed charming now to Fielding, and he might have carried out his project of starting on a tramp that day ; he might possibly not even have returned to Bolingbroke Place any more ; but that the first appearance of the postman there was accompanied by the short note from Gabrielle asking him to call on her. He was delighted ; he was made angry ; he was embarrassed. It could only, of course, be another attempt to get at all that he knew about Vanthorpe ; and there was something in the style of the letter which seemed to his sensitive mood like the command of one who feels herself vastly superior to him whom she addresses. He was for a moment almost in the humour to say that Mrs. Vanthorpe had written to him as if she were ordering a tradesman to come to her and take some commission from her. But he remembered how Gabrielle always looked and spoke ; and this thought soon died. In truth, it is not pleasant to be summoned by a woman with whom one feels himself fast falling in love merely because she wants to ask you about some one else, in whom she feels an interest that she does not feel in you. And then, in order

that injustice may not be done to Fielding by making him out wholly concerned about himself, it ought to be said that he greatly feared the tale he had now to tell of the Vanthorpe he knew would hardly make him a welcome messenger.

A tap at his door was followed, almost before he had time to call out inquiry or invitation, by the appearance of Mr. Lefussis.

'I have come to consult you, Fielding, on a matter of great importance, or perhaps I should say of delicacy rather than of importance: a question of propriety.'

'If it is a question of propriety,' Fielding replied, 'you have come, Lefussis, to the right shop; especially if it should happen to be a question of etiquette. Court etiquette I am particularly strong upon. Likewise that of evening parties. I have ceased to study the Complete Guide to the Ball-room, because I have made myself master of its contents, so that I think, in the unhappy event of the work being destroyed, I could supply its place from memory. So you see, Lefussis, in me you have found the very man you wanted. Put out your lantern!'

'I should not have thought of troubling you, Fielding, on matters of such trivial import. You misconceive me, my dear friend, altogether. This is a question of honourable feeling; of the course that is permitted to a gentleman. I have the happiness, Fielding, to be acquainted with men of the highest class our ancient aristocracy has nourished; but this I will say, Fielding,—and I have to request, sir, that I may not be interrupted,—I will say, sir, even in your presence, that I do not know among those illustrious men anyone whom I believe to have a nicer sense of honour than you have yourself.'

'All right,' said Fielding, 'go ahead.'

'You see that?' and Lefussis tendered a crispy piece of paper to his friend for inspection.

'Regardless,' Fielding answered, 'of the fact that anything I now say will be taken down and may be used in evidence against me, I have no hesitation in admitting, Lefussis, that I do see the object you hold out towards me.'

'You know what it is?'

'There have been melancholy intervals during which the rareness of the sight might make me cautious about pledging myself as to identity. But at the moment I should say it was a ten-pound note.'

'You are right,' said Lefussis with an air of triumph, as if he had been backing Fielding to solve some difficult problem and his friend had been successful. 'Now look at that and tell me what you make of that,' and he handed over another piece of paper.

'This,' Fielding declared, after having calmly surveyed it, 'I take to be an envelope addressed to "Jasper Lefussis, Esquire, 3, Bolingbroke Place, West Centre." Is my interpretation yours, Lefussis?'

'So far, Fielding, you are undoubtedly correct; but you have not gone below the surface. Look on the inside of the envelope, and tell me what you find there.'

Fielding did as he was bidden with a gravity equal to that of Lefussis himself, who never acknowledged, by the faintest smile, the existence of any jest, and possibly never perceived that such a thing had existence. 'I find the words written in a fashion meant, I think, to resemble print: "For Mr. Lefussis; restitution money; a case of conscience."'

'Just so,' and Lefussis patted approvingly Fielding's chest with the back of his lean hand; 'just so. Now comes the question on which I have to ask you, Fielding, as a friend, sincere, I am sure, although recent, to apply all the power of your vigorous intellect and all the keenness of your sense of honour. You have the whole of the evidence in your possession. Such as that document is, the postman has just brought it to me. I know nothing more of it than you do. The question is, am I at liberty to take that money and use it for my own purposes?'

'The question,' Fielding answered, 'does not call for one moment's consideration. Of course you are.'

The eyes of Lefussis brightened.

'This is a case, you will observe,' he said, with a certain diminution of the brightness, 'in which a man is bound to be particularly careful how he trusts to his own impressions. I will not conceal from you, Fielding—I never have concealed from you—the fact that my means are restricted, indeed, very limited; and that the possession of ten pounds is an object to me. But that is the very reason why I must refuse to be guided by any inclinations of my own. Now, to begin with, is this money mine?'

'Of course it is: whose could it be?'

'But by what means has it become my property?'

'I should say the case is clear. The sender declares that he forwards you the money as restitution, as a case of conscience—we can hardly suppose that so sensitively conscientious a person is telling a lie merely for the purpose of getting rid of a ten-pound note. Scrupulous persons have occasionally overcome their scruples, I believe, to get possession of such things; but the other position, Lefussis, is not one to be maintained. May not some one have borrowed the money from you long ago, or swindled you out of it?

From my knowledge of you, Lefussis, I should say that nothing was more probable.'

'Then your decision, as a man of honour, is that I am entitled to keep this money?'

'My decision is that the money is undoubtedly yours.'

'Another question now arises, one of less delicacy, however; rather a question for a practical man of the world. You see this coat, Fielding, that I am now wearing, these garments generally, indeed, and this hat I hold in my hand?'

'I see them,' said Fielding, surveying his friend's exterior with a certain melancholy interest.

'What is your opinion of them generally?'

'I should say,' Fielding answered after proper deliberation, 'that they were very becoming garments in their place—that is to say, in Bolingbroke Place; but that they ought not, if possible, to be displayed outside the limits of that enclosure.'

'Your opinion, Fielding, exactly concurs with my own; but I place greater reliance on yours, because you are a young man, and you observe changes in fashion with a quicker eye than I can pretend to have. The fact is, I have been invited by Major Leven to breakfast with him, and I will own to you that I was a little in doubt about the cut and condition of these clothes. You will remember my expressing that opinion to you with great frankness, on an occasion of another kind two or three days ago, Fielding, my dear friend?'

Fielding remembered it perfectly well.

'Strange, is it not, that just in the nick of time, as one might say, this unknown debtor should turn up?'

Well, yes, Fielding thought it was strange; or, no—he did not see that there was anything particularly strange in it. Yet perhaps, if one turned it over, there really was something a little strange in it. So it was settled between them that the thing was to be considered a little strange. Lefussis went his way in high delight, to buy a suit of ready-made clothes in which to present himself at Major Leven's. 'It's all the more lucky, Fielding,' he said, as he was departing, 'because I have to call at the Foreign Office to-day; Lord Bosworth has promised to give me another interview, although I happen to know, as a matter of fact, that he has declined to see either Granville or Hartington on the same subject. It is just as well, therefore, that one has a decent coat; it looks better, Fielding, it looks better.'

Fielding was evidently getting himself up with some care for his personal appearance that morning. He took a considerable time in dressing after he had got rid of Lefussis. Likewise he

looked with curious dissatisfaction at some of his clothes. 'I'm really not much better than dear old Lefussis,' he thought. 'I had better send myself a trifle of restitution-money, and go and buy a coat or two.' Fielding had somehow been put into good spirits by the visit of Lefussis. He was delighted to have been the means of pleasing 'dear old Lefussis,' and inducing him to buy a new coat, as Charlton had sneeringly suggested that he ought to do before going into respectable society; and he was especially glad that Lefussis had not had the faintest suspicion of where the money came from. 'It is restitution money; it is a matter of conscience,' Fielding told himself; 'I owe something to my own conscience for having made fun of the poor old boy so often, with his Foreign Office and his Lord Bosworth.'

Fielding was standing at his door preparing to go out, when Robert Charlton came down the stairs.

'Going out early?' Charlton observed.

'As you say, early,' Fielding answered; 'that is, for me. I suppose you industrious child of art would consider this rather late.'

'I am a working man,' Charlton said; 'I have to keep the working-man's hours. Going west?'

'Like the great Orion,' Fielding replied, 'I am sloping slowly to the west.'

'I saw you at the concert yesterday.'

'You didn't seem as if you wanted to see much of me, Charlton. You rather sneaked away, I thought.'

'You seemed to be so agreeably engaged, it would have been a cruelty to intrude myself on you. A charming lady Mrs. Vanthorpe! Are you going to visit her to-day, perhaps?'

'I am,' Fielding answered with a sudden sternness, strangely unlike his usual manner. 'What then? You go to visit her sometimes, don't you?'

'When she sends for me,' Charlton replied. 'When she wishes me to come to her and take her orders, then I go and take her orders, you understand.'

'Very well,' Fielding said, still in the same tone; 'she has sent for me, and I am going to take her orders.'

'I am very glad to hear it for your sake; she is a very liberal lady; and I have no doubt she will remunerate you handsomely for any loss of time you may have on her account.'

Fielding looked at him fixedly as he stood slowly beating one hand against the other and looking up with a curious expression of spiteful slyness. Then good-humour prevailed as usual with Fielding, and he laughed.

‘What a discontented malignant old villain you are, to be sure, Charlton!’ he said. ‘I call you old, because you are awfully old, you know. You never could have been young at any time. I firmly believe you are one of the fairies that get changed for the children of honest mortals. Why do you always go on as if some wrong were being done to you by some one? I’m not going to cut you out of Mrs. Vanthorpe’s patronage; she wouldn’t entrust her pretty work into my clumsy hands, I can assure you.’

‘I wish you would not talk of patronage, Fielding—I don’t like it. I have told you already no one patronises me.’ And Charlton disappeared in sudden anger.

He did not go far, however; for when Fielding was fairly out of sight, Charlton came back, tried Fielding’s door, found it open, and went in. He remained in the room for a long time, rummaging among Fielding’s papers, with delicate hands too supple and skilful to make any disturbance; he opened books, looked at envelopes, and, where he had a chance, read letters. Sometimes he heard a sound outside, and then he started like one caught in a crime, and sprang to the attitude of an uncertain visitor who had casually looked into the room expecting to find its owner there. Not many sounds, however, disturbed those dull stairs and passages, after the hours in the day when most of the lodgers went out to their business. As each alarm that had disturbed Charlton proved false, he went quietly back to his search among the papers. Apparently it was some time before he found anything worth his search. Suddenly, however, he came on something which made him clap his hands together in exultation. It was not in outward seeming a great treasure-trove. It was only a little package of letters, some of which were addressed to ‘Mr. Clarkson,’ and others to ‘Clarkson Selbridge Esq.,’ ‘Mr. Clarkson Selbridge,’ and simply ‘Mr. Selbridge.’ All these envelopes bore foreign postmarks; none of them were addressed to Bolingbroke Place, or to any place in England. Charlton opened some of them. Those he read were for the most part utterly unimportant—at least, they referred apparently to trivial matters of business or social intercourse of which he could make nothing, and a few were in French. It was not, however, for the contents of the letters that Charlton particularly cared. For aught he knew, they might be concocted on some plan which allowed the merest trivialities to stand for something of unspeakable importance and mystery to the initiated. The point which had interest for him, and made him feel triumphant, was that Fielding had evidently been receiving letters under three different names.

He was satisfied for the present. He put the letters and

envelopes carefully back where he had found them. He stopped a moment before opening the door, and passing out of the room: suppose anyone should happen to see him? The blood coloured his thin cheeks at the thought. Suppose some one had seen him go into the room, and noted how long he remained there, and met him as he came out? He could say, of course, that he had gone in to look for Fielding, and had waited some time in the hope that Fielding would return; but suppose some one had seen him who was suspicious, and who asked no questions but set in turn to watch him, and found him another time in Fielding's room? Suppose some little child even saw him, and babbled to other lodgers? In that melancholy house nearly all the residents were poor. Fielding alone was known to have money sometimes; everyone knew that he was liberal of his money now and then; others as well as Charlton might have had an opportunity of observing that he had a costly diamond. Suppose it were to be suspected that Charlton had secreted himself in Fielding's room with the purpose of robbing him? Charlton turned almost sick at the thought. He felt miserably humbled anyhow by his consciousness of having done a disgraceful thing, in thus creeping into Fielding's room with the base purpose of getting at his secrets; but he might have overlooked this, and persuaded himself that he was doing right in trying to expose imposture, were it not for the sort of danger in which his conduct might involve himself. Suppose anyone should have watched him going into the room and coming out of it, and that soon after Fielding should be robbed? He drew back into the room and almost cowered behind the door as he thought of this. But even while he clung nervously to his shelter the idea occurred to him—suppose Fielding should suddenly return now and find him skulking in the room? This thought was so much more alarming than any other that he hastily pulled the door open and rushed into the passage, to find himself all but confronted with Janet, who was in the act of descending the stairs, and had just reached the turn in the staircase which commanded the spot where her husband stood.

‘Why, Robert!’ was her surprised exclamation.

‘Hush; hold your tongue!’ was Charlton's angry utterance—as if he had actually done something which demanded silence; as if the walls might hear.

‘Is Mr. Fielding sick?’ Janet asked in a low tone and with alarmed expression as she tripped lightly down the stairs and stood beside him. She thought her husband's command of silence must be a caution not to disturb a patient.

‘How do I know?’

‘Why, because you were in his room, and I thought——’

‘I didn’t know that you were much given to thinking,’ he said, recovering himself a little. ‘About Mr. Fielding, perhaps—that might be different. Don’t be alarmed; he is not sick; he is quite well; I saw him only a short time ago.’

‘I thought you might have been looking for him, in his room,’ the unlucky Janet went on unsuspectingly. ‘Were you there all the time, Robert?’

‘All what time?’

‘Since you went out, I mean. Or have you been to the West End and come back already?’

‘What I want to know,’ Charlton said, ‘is what you were doing here, Janet. That’s just the thing I shall trouble you to explain, if you have no objection.’

‘Why, Robert dear, of course, I was going for the silver wire that you wanted. You told me to go for it—don’t you remember?’

‘Oh, I remember a great many things, I can assure you,’ he replied with an emphasis as though his words contained some terrible significance; ‘I don’t forget anything, I can assure you. Very well, you can go for the silver wire.’

She went her way, pained and puzzled, but uncomplaining, and wishing the spell of Mrs. Vanthorpe’s presence might be tried on Robert soon again. Her husband went half way up the stairs and then turned down again and cautiously followed his wife at a distance. It was all very well about the silver wire; but what was the meaning of her passing Fielding’s door just at that moment, and her asking in such a tone of alarm about Fielding?

He followed poor Janet until he had made it clear even to his mind that she was only going to buy the silver wire, and that as soon as she had got it she returned to her dull home, where she was to remain alone until he should return to keep her company. Charlton had a great deal of work to do that day, some of it pressing in point of time, and some of a very delicate kind requiring a dexterous manipulation which would in ordinary circumstances have engrossed all his interest. But he did not seem inclined to settle down to work. When he had seen Janet fairly disposed of, he started off for Gabrielle’s house, and he took his stand at a convenient corner from which he could see anybody passing out or in. There or thereabout he was determined to stay until he should see Fielding come out. He would follow Fielding then, and see where he went next.

CHAPTER XI.

‘ONE DREAM GOES: ANOTHER GROWS.’

THE lot of the patronised has been pretty often deplored. ‘The patron and the jail’ have been classed together as among the cruellest trials of struggling artistic genius. Perhaps, however, there may be a word to say now and then for the sufferings of the patron. Gabrielle Vanthorpe was not looking at the matter from that point of view; for she was too single-minded and generous even to think of herself as the patron of the gifted young daughter of music who was for the time abiding in her house. But it is certain that the companionship of Miss Elvin the evening after the concert and the next morning had a good deal that was trying in it. Miss Elvin had not returned to her home when the concert was over, as she had declared in the first instance that she must certainly do—for how could her brother exist without her any longer?—she had quietly settled herself at Gabrielle’s, and said nothing of departing for the present. She was not satisfied with the result of the concert. The applause she got had not been nearly emphatic enough to make her certain of success. The trial was apparently to make all over again. She had not been noticed much by Lady Honeybell as she was leaving the hall; in fact, as it afterwards turned out, Lady Honeybell, in the confusion and crowd of the breaking up, had scarcely seen the little singer, and did not remember in the least who she was. Mr. Taxal had not presented himself at Gabrielle’s house that evening, nor indeed had anyone come there at all; and, so far as any outward appearances were concerned, Miss Elvin might as well never have sung at the concert. She and Gabrielle dined alone, and although Miss Elvin liked her dinner very much, she did not particularly care for a mere *tête-à-tête* with her patroness. She therefore assumed an air of patient despondency; she put on the manner of the unappreciated and the misprized; she refused any consoling reassurances of Gabrielle’s, and somehow contrived to convey the impression that her comparative failure had come of her having consented to sing at such a place at all, and that her good nature in yielding to the suggestions of Gabrielle and of Mr. Taxal had been the chief cause of her disaster. It now appeared that her brother had always especially disapproved of her singing at charitable concerts where there were any amateurs; and Miss Elvin took frequent occasion of expressing her remorse at having forgotten even in one instance his wise fraternal injunction.

Gabrielle awoke the next morning with a curious sense of *oppression* and of anxiety. She was some seconds awake before

she could quite realise what this sensation meant. By degrees she remembered that she had been seemingly the innocent cause of Miss Elvin's disappointment; and also that she had written to Fielding, asking him to come and see her; and that on that day therefore she was in all probability to learn something about her late husband's brother. Now that the time was so near at hand she felt a little nervous about the news she was to hear; and a little nervous too as to the step she had taken in inviting a man of whom she knew next to nothing to a confidential interview. She had to listen to a good many plaintive expressions of disappointment from Miss Elvin at breakfast. The singer had been awake half the night, longing for morning and the newspapers; and now morning and the newspapers had come and brought with them little contentment. The 'Times' had nothing whatever about the concert; the 'Daily News' coolly announced that owing to a pressure of matter it had been compelled to hold over for that day several musical and dramatic notices; the 'Daily Telegraph' had a short paragraph which did not mention Miss Elvin; the 'Morning Post,' concerned only about Lady Honeybell and the distinguished persons who patronised the independence of Thibet, disposed of the concert in a few words of general praise; the 'Standard' gave the names of the performers, but only said that they all acquitted themselves with their accustomed success, and took no account of the fact that one of them at least was a *débutante* thirsting for success but not yet accustomed to it. 'I am not disappointed; no, not in the least!' Miss Elvin said; 'I knew it would be so; I knew that the conspiracy would pursue me.' Gabrielle did her best to console the young artist; but the consolation was inefficient, partly for the reason that Gabrielle hardly understood what the distressed singer was talking about.

It was a relief when, at an hour unusually early for visitors, she was told that Mr. Fielding was waiting to see her. Gabrielle felt, although relieved, a good deal confused too, for she hardly knew what Fielding would think of her invitation, nor was she quite clear on what footing she ought to receive him. It pleased her that he had called at an unusual hour; it showed that he regarded the visit as something in the nature of a matter of business and not an ordinary call made at a lady's house by one of her friends. There was peculiar delicacy, it seemed to her, in Fielding's putting the matter in this way. Still the interview would necessarily be a little out of the common. She thought for a moment of asking the young singer to accompany her to the room where Fielding was waiting; but she dismissed the idea at once. In the first place, Miss Elvin did not seem a very

sympathetic person, absorbed as she was now in her own disappointment ; and in the next place, Fielding might have some important revelation to make, which ought not to come to the ears of an outsider. Then, again, Gabrielle had always scouted the idea that a woman is to be restrained by mere forms and fancies from discharging a serious duty ; and was she now to hesitate because the duty involved a quarter of an hour's talk in her own house with a strange man ? As she came to the door of the room where Fielding was waiting, she felt, nevertheless, a curious misgiving, and her heart almost failed her. It came back upon her mind in that instant how she had felt a sensation precisely similar when she was turning into Bolingbroke Place the first day she saw him. It was a tremulous sensation, like a foreboding of something momentous to happen ; a sensation vague and sudden as the quick indefinable association of fancies or memories that a chance note of music, the perfume of a flower, or the sparkle of a wave may bring with it, but not like any of these in its impression ; something *schauderhaft* and ominous. Gabrielle only stopped for a moment, however, and then shook off the absurd feeling and went in.

There was nothing very *eerie* or ominous to meet her eyes when she entered the room. Only a tall, dark-haired young man leaning with his back to the chimney-piece, not wholly without suggestion of danger to the tiny cups and saucers and other bits of ornament and nick-nack there—perhaps that was the foreboding, Gabrielle thought, as she saw some of her precious trifles thus imperilled. One thing displeased Gabrielle an instant after, she could hardly tell why. As Fielding stood, he had his back to a portrait of Albert Vanthorpe that rested on the chimney-piece, and his figure completely shut out the picture from her eyes.

‘Mr. Fielding,’ she said, ‘I shall make no apology for asking you to come and see me. You know, I suppose, what an interest I must have in all that concerns the family of my husband—my late husband ; and you seem to have known something of a brother of his. You said as much to me yourself, and I heard it from others too.’

Fielding was still standing near the chimney-piece, hat in hand ; she had not asked him to sit down. She thought the more formal and business-like the meeting could be made the better. Her manner impressed him disagreeably. He remembered what Charlton had said about her that morning. He only bowed slightly and waited for her to go on with what she had to say. She thought she had said enough, and that it was now for him to speak.

‘Well, Mr. Fielding ?’ she spoke at last with a certain *impatience* in her tone.

'I beg your pardon; you had not quite finished, I think; I didn't quite understand what you wished me to say.'

'Oh—didn't I understand that you knew something of the brother of Mr. Albert Vanthorpe, the son of the lady we saw at the concert the other day?'

There ought to have been something in the words 'we saw at the concert' to move Fielding. To be made one, even for a second, and in no matter what passing unmeaning way in that 'we,' ought to have been pleasant to his ear. But Fielding had taken a notion into his head which had possession of him. He thought that Gabrielle was treating him *de haut en bas*, as if he were a creature of a different class, sent for to take orders, as Charlton put it. 'She thinks she is talking to Charlton, I suppose,' he thought to himself. He had himself said to Charlton that it would delight him to be patronised by her, or to be trodden on by her; but at that time he did not believe that he was likely to be patronised or trodden on by her.

'I really don't know, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' he said politely, but very coolly, 'whether I ever did meet a son of that lady or not. No name is so uncommon, I suppose, but that there may be persons bearing it who are not related to each other. I am not acquainted with the lady you speak of; how should I know whether I ever met her son?'

'But the very way in which you looked at her that day showed that you took some interest in her.'

'Do you think so? That only shows how ladies may be deceived. I had only one reason for looking at her, and that was because I saw you looking at her. I followed your eyes: and I saw that they turned to a lady in black, and I turned to the lady in black. That is the whole of that story, I can assure you.'

Gabrielle was at first disposed to feel offended at this way of putting the matter. It seemed like an impertinent compliment. A faint colour came into her face, and she began to wish that she had not asked Mr. Fielding to come and see her. He saw that she was hurt, and he was not sorry for it. He was in rather a savage mood for the moment. Gabrielle recovered herself at once. She had brought the interview on herself, and she was quite equal to going through with it.

'But you spoke,' she said quietly, 'in a manner which led me to believe that you knew something about one who has long been lost sight of, and in whom I feel a great interest naturally. Besides, you asked me yourself whether she still hoped she had a son; his mother, I mean.'

'A very innocent question,' Fielding said

‘Very ; in an ordinary case a very unmeaning question, but in this case it seemed to me to have a meaning ; and I thought it meant a great deal. It seemed to me to show that you did know something that much concerns his mother.’

‘But—excuse me—his mother?’

‘You mean that it is his mother’s affair and not mine? That would be a fair enough answer to my curiosity if you had not spoken to me on the matter. But since you did——’

‘No, no, I don’t mean that; I mean that it is not at all certain that that lady is the mother of the Vanthorpe I used to know, since you appear to have heard that I once did know a man of that name.’

‘You are only trifling with me, Mr. Fielding; I am afraid I am wasting your time to no purpose. I see now that I had no right to ask you any questions or to ask you to come here. I thought there could be no harm in asking you to tell me something about one who might, at least, turn out to be a near connexion of my own. I did not suppose there could be any difficulty in the way; but if there is, I have only to apologise for having put you to all this trouble for nothing. I sometimes do impulsive things; I wish I didn’t.’

‘So do I,’ he said. ‘I do impulsive things; I did an impulsive thing when I spoke in any way of all this.’

‘I am sorry to have put you to so much trouble,’ she said coldly; ‘if there is any way in which——’

‘In which you can remunerate me for my time and trouble?’ he asked—‘a money payment, perhaps—so much an hour?’

‘I meant nothing of the kind,’ Gabrielle answered warmly, ‘and you know it very well. I never supposed you were a person to whom one could offer money.’

‘When a man is poor,’ he said, ‘you ladies, I suppose, think he must be looking out for money.’

‘But I don’t believe you are poor; or if you are, is it not your own fault? Tell me honestly—is it not your own fault? Tell me, am I wrong in speaking to you this way? Am I wrong in not being offended by your words and your rude manner? Is there no reason why I may have a right to speak to you?’

For she was now quite carried out of herself, first by what seemed his confession of poverty, and next by the sudden return of her former impression that he really was her husband’s brother, and that he was for that reason alone evading any answer. She made a movement towards him with eyes all lighted by sympathy and hope, and was on the very point of asking him, ‘Are you not indeed my husband’s brother?’ He was simply bewildered by her

words and her manner. 'This is the lady-patroness, indeed,' he thought at first. 'She hears that I am poor and at once fancies she is bound to make an offer of service.' He was touched at the same time by the singular kindness of her manner.

'Come,' she said impatiently; 'if you are poor, is it not your own fault?'

'Most bad things that happen to us come of our own fault, I suppose,' he answered slowly. 'I can blame no one but myself for anything bad that has come on me.'

'I thought so; I knew that. Come, tell me honestly—do I not know more of you than you thought at first?'

'Positively, I don't know.'

'Do I not know already who you are?'

He seemed a little staggered at first by this remarkable home-thrust. But he pulled himself together, and although there was a higher colour on his face, he only shook his head and said with a smile:—

'I don't think so, Mrs. Vanthorpe.'

'Your name is not Fielding,' she said abruptly.

'For whom on earth does she take me?' Fielding asked of himself. 'Oh, pardon me,' he said aloud, 'my name is Fielding; I sometimes wish it were not.'

'Your name is Fielding really?'

'Really and truly—what do you suppose it should be?' He was much inclined to ask, 'What would you like it to be?' and to add, 'Tell me, and I will call myself accordingly if it pleases you.'

Gabrielle felt dashed to the very ground. Her castle of cards had toppled down. She had made herself ridiculous in the eyes of an absolute stranger. There was no mistake possible as to the seriousness and genuineness of his reply. His face showed the most utter astonishment when she appealed to him about his name. Her fancy and her impulses had shamefully betrayed her. She could hardly keep the tears from rising in her eyes.

'Mr. Fielding,' she said, 'you must see that I have allowed myself to become the victim of the strangest mistake; it was all my own doing, and I have no one to blame for it. I needn't tell you what it was; I am always making impulsive mistakes; and this is one of them. Will you do me two great favours: first to forgive the trouble I have imposed on you, and next not to try to guess at any explanation?' It was part of Gabrielle's nature to trust herself to anyone, and to believe that she would meet a true man in everybody.

'I saw there was a mistake,' Fielding said, making the least of it purposely. 'You thought I was this missing Vanthorpe? I

could wish with all my heart I were, if it could give you any pleasure; it would be turning a good-for-nothing existence to some account. I ought to have spoken out at once, Mrs. Vanthorpe, and then all this mistake would never have come about. But, to speak the truth and shame—my own absurdity, I fancied that you were treating me with contempt for being poor; and that is a sort of thing I can't stand even from a lady.'

'See how wrong you were,' Gabrielle said, brightening. 'I did not think you were poor. On the contrary, I thought—in the lucid intervals when I was not occupied with that other ridiculous idea—I thought you were——'

'Rich, perhaps? and living in Bolingbroke Place for the beauty of the situation and the elegance of the apartments?'

'No, not rich, perhaps, but certainly not poor; I never thought of your being poor.'

'Why not, Mrs. Vanthorpe?'

'I don't really know; you did not seem to me to have the manners of a poor man—you seemed too independent.'

He smiled.

'What you call independence of manner is very often only the surest proof of poverty. It is like the Spanish beggar's ragged mantle, which the more ragged it is the more proudly he draws it around him.'

'At all events,' she said warmly, 'I knew you were a gentleman, and I know that still.'

'Thank heaven, bad as we are, we have not yet come to make it a social law that there can't be a poor gentleman.'

'Can nothing be done?' she said simply and very gently. 'You ought not to be poor; you have talents and education, any one can see that. I have some friends, Mr. Fielding, who perhaps could do something to get a man of talent a way of showing what he can do. If you would only not be so very very independent—if you would only tell me what you can do, and allow me to speak to one or two friends, why, something might be done.' The conclusion of the sentence was lame, but the feeling which dictated it had wings.

There was something so winning in her sweet kindly way, so winning in the very delicacy which made it difficult for her to bring her sentence to anything like a properly rounded period, that Fielding felt himself really growing into that mood which he had described to Charlton when he vowed that nothing would please him more than to be patronised by her. She saw his hesitation, but in her impulsive way guessed at its cause wrongly.

'Come,' she said, taking courage as he seemed embarrassed; 'I

can quite understand you, Mr. Fielding. You are terribly independent, and above all things you don't like, I dare say, taking a helping hand from a woman. But a woman may be a very useful and sensible friend, I can assure you. Come, I have heard many good things of you from Mrs. Charlton, and I owe you some thanks for taking the trouble to come here, and not to laugh at my mistake, which would have annoyed me very much. Let me try to serve you if I can. Tell me what you are trying to do in London, and perhaps I may be able to do something to put you in the right way.'

'You are putting me in the right way already.'

'How so, Mr. Fielding?'

'Why, simply by being so kind and taking such an interest in me; is that nothing?'

'Oh no, that's not much; I take an interest in so many people. I want to be more of a friend than that. I have taken it into my head that you are an artist or an author. Now, I have some friends who know great artists and great authors. Can't I serve you in some way?'

'Will you let me think it over a little before I ask any favour?'

'Surely yes; I should like you to think it over.'

'Then may I come and see you again, when I have thought it over and made up my mind?'

'I shall be pleased to see you at any time, and I feel greatly obliged to you for having taken my offer exactly as it was meant.'

He had grown marvellously sententious, and he seemed under a very cloud of embarrassment. The kinder she was, the more anxious he became to put off telling his Vanthorpe story. He went away almost immediately, and it was only after he had gone that Gabrielle remembered he had not told her a single word about the missing Vanthorpe. In truth, she felt so greatly dashed at the ludicrous bursting of one of her fancy bubbles, that she had not composure enough to remember that other conjectures well worth considering, probabilities well deserving of thought, remained still undisturbed. It was certain that Fielding had known some Vanthorpe, that Fielding had some objection to tell all he knew, and that in Fielding's mind there was some doubt whether Vanthorpe's mother would be glad or sorry if he still lived. Here surely was unexplained mystery enough to satisfy the most romantic young woman that she had something still to find out; and Gabrielle had allowed the one man who knew all about it to go away without explaining a single word. 'What a fool he must think I am! How

ridiculous I have made myself! Shall I always make myself ridiculous in this kind of way? Shall I never be able to control any impulse or to act as ordinary human beings act?'

Then again she consoled herself with the reflection that after all she had found out something that no one else had got any clue to—she had found a man who could tell something about the lost Vanthorpe, and it was only the other day that Major Leven had said it would be of great importance for the sake of Mrs. Leven if any trace of the vanished prodigal could be found. It had been Gabrielle's dream to become in some way the benefactress of Mrs. Leven, and now who should say that after all she might not realise her hope by finding out the lost son, and reconciling him and her? Fielding's ominous doubt as to whether the mother of the Vanthorpe he had known would be glad to hear that her son was living, may have been only because the son was poor; some mothers were mean and selfish like that, Gabrielle supposed; but she knew that Mrs. Leven was not one of these; and anyhow poverty was a defect that could be repaired if only the sundered mother and son could be brought together again. On the whole, Gabrielle thought after a while that she had some right to be reassured, and that she had not made such a bad morning's work of it after all. One thing certain was that she must somehow contrive to see Fielding again. Would it do to ask Major Leven to go to him, and find out all about things? Oh, no, Gabrielle settled, after one or two moments' reflection, that would never do. Fielding might refuse to be communicative if challenged in that formal way. Besides, it was possible, although she hoped only possible in the remotest way, that something had to be told which would shock Mrs. Leven to hear, and then how unfair and wrong to put the responsibility on Major Leven of keeping a secret from his wife! There was no way, Gabrielle convinced herself, of solving all the difficulties, but for her to see Fielding again, and beg him to be implicit and then act according to her own best judgment—in which, despite any recent mistakes, she still retained much confidence.

In all perplexity or distress it was her way to seclude herself in the room consecrated to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe, and meditate there, and make it her oratory and her shrine, and seek for help and guidance there. She hid herself there now. But her mind was morbidly active that day, and her mood of quick awakened curiosity did not seem suited to such a place. She found her thoughts straying incessantly, tantalizingly, from the associations that the room inspired, away to conjectures as to what story Fielding could have to tell, and how she could contrive decorously to get to confidential speech of him again, and who Fielding was,

and what she could do for him, and why he lived in Bolingbroke Place, and what he must have thought of her. It was certain that he was a gentleman and a man of education, she thought; she was sure he must be an artist or an author; artists and authors when they were young were very often poor, she had heard, and lived in regions even less attractive than Bolingbroke Place. In the end, of course, they became splendid successes, those who had real merit in them; they wrote books that all the world read, and all the world ran after them, or they became presidents of the Royal Academy. She was sure Mr. Fielding was just the man to write a great book, or to become President of the Royal Academy. What a glorious career; how sublime a life that which led to such a success; what a great thing to be a man who could put his foot even on the lowest round of such a ladder—and for those who could not pretend to such a career, how glorious to be the means of lending a helping hand in time to that struggling genius whose seraph flight was so often checked by poverty and friendlessness! If she could thus make her life sublime by assisting such a flight, how happy she should be! She resolved that at least she would try, and that no miserable feminine fear of being misunderstood should bar her purpose. Fielding's very peculiarities of manner seemed the natural expression of the proud independent consciousness of genius. His every word showed that noble scorn of patronage that she knew must be in the soul of each true artist. 'Can I have offended him? Can I have seemed as if I were trying to act the part of an insolent patroness to him?' she thought in alarm and shame; and then it suddenly occurred to her that these feelings were not exactly in harmony with the associations of that solemn sacred chamber, and she abased herself before Albert Vanthorpe's memory. But when she was called on to see some visitor she was not sorry for an excuse to leave the room. She felt like a devotee who has for once detected himself in mere worldly cares and ambitions in the presence of the image of his saint.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE FIELDING WENT NEXT, AND NEXT.

'I wish I were an artist; I wish I were an author,' was Fielding's thought as he passed from Gabrielle's door, all unconscious of any curious eyes following his movements. 'I wonder could I write a book if I were to try; or paint a picture, or compose an opera? I don't see why I shouldn't write a book—a book of travels perhaps, or a novel—a sensation novel, and make

Bolingbroke Place the scene of some awful mystery or murder. It is just the spot for something of the kind. While I was doing it I could go and see Mrs. Vanthorpe every now and then, and take her opinion about it; and make her think I had no chance of getting anyone to publish it, except through her; and never get it finished; and always have her for my patroness. I might bring poor Vanthorpe into it.'

The thought of Vanthorpe broke grimly in on the sweet tantalizing whimsical fancies of the young man. There was a painful reality there which did not harmonise with his dream of some literary Penelope's-web to be kept always going on and never finished under the kindly eyes of Gabrielle Vanthorpe. He lounged listlessly, not well knowing what he was actually doing, towards Kensington Gardens. On the way he passed many a house which he had known, and where he had been welcome in old days; and he fell to thinking of the old days and the inmates of this house and that, and whether they were alive still, and whether they would remember him or care to see him if they were alive. He began wondering too whether he had really gained much in independence, or experience, or strength, or soul, or anything since he made up his mind in his boyhood to cast in his lot with freedom and to have done with the respectabilities and the conventionalities. He had passed the same houses many a time, even since his latest return to London, and he had not thought about them in such a way, nor moralized about himself and his past career. Why was he moralizing and questioning now?

Major Leven was right. The young man in Bolingbroke Place was the second son of old Sir Jacob Fielding, a great city man of that better class out of whom no one thinks of making a Lord Mayor; a philanthropist who went in for every conceivable good cause, and also for religion and morality. Sir Jacob took the chair at all manner of philanthropic meetings. His cheque-book never failed any virtuous enterprise which was likely to be noticed in the newspapers or to attract the attention of any princely or even ducal person. He was a thoroughly good man in the narrow and what we may call the vulgar sense. He honestly believed that the whole duty of humanity was to be respectable. A once strange product of our curious civilisation, a product now grown too common to attract attention or to call for any comment, is that respectability which has nothing to do with any of the positive virtues of manhood, but accomplishes its mission and earns its title by allowing its name to be put down on a committee-list, and signing away by cheque sums of money which it never misses.

When Jacob Fielding was young, he married a woman who was not handsome, but who had a fortune. She had one son whom he called Wilberforce Fielding, and she died soon after. Many years passed away, and Jacob, who was now Sir Jacob with a baronet's title given in reward of his philanthropic cheques, married Miss Selbridge, a young and pretty woman of good family who had no money and whose people talked her into the match. It suited them to have her married to this very rich and highly respectable man; and it suited him, for it gave him at least a sort of left-handed connexion with the better society of London. But it did not suit the poor young woman at all. For she had not only a warm heart but an artistic sort of nature which found Sir Jacob's home heavy and dull; and she had a considerable amount of humour which enabled her to see its ludicrous side rather too clearly. She had one child, the boy whom, in her despite, Sir Jacob would call Clarkson, after one of the heroes of Sir Jacob's own youth; and it was not long before Clarkson's mother died and left her child to be brought up by Sir Jacob. The young Clarkson never gave satisfaction. He had a great deal of his mother's nature in him, to begin with; and almost from his very childhood he had got it somehow into his head that she had been the victim of some kind of harsh treatment. This was decidedly a mistake. She had always been treated well by Sir Jacob; the only wrong done to her being that she was provided with a wealthy match which many other girls, even of family better than hers, would have jumped at. But then she was not like most other girls, and her son turned out not to be like most other young men. He seemed from the first to resent his name and his position. He hated to be called Clarkson; he did not believe in his father's philanthropy. His brother was too old to be anything like a companion to him. A pious tutor to whom he was assigned for a time deplored the fatal fact that what he called a dreadful modern spirit of analysis had taken possession of Clarkson's mind, which led him to hold nothing sacred from inquiry. Withal he was imperturbably good-humoured. He would not go to either of the great universities. He insisted that the universities destroyed all the fresh manhood of thought; and to Sir Jacob's mind there could be nothing respectable which had not that hall-mark of the universities denied to his own dissenting younger days. So Clarkson went first to Heidelberg, where he learned Pessimism, and then to Paris, where he took to the Latin Quarter a good deal; and when he came home he made fun openly of his father's guests, and tried to rouse his elder brother into mutiny against the respectabilities, like himself. He declined to go to church on the Sunday when

they were in the country ; for Sir Jacob had long conformed to the Establishment ; and at last he left his father's house altogether. There was no quarrel, at least on his part. He was as sweet-tempered as he was unmanageable. He merely said that the kind of life his father and brother were leading was stifling him, and that he could not stand any more of it.

Sir Jacob was not sorry on the whole when his younger son was fairly gone. The elder son promised to become a very reputable head of a rising county family in time ; and the younger was always making fun of what he politely called playing at aristocracy. These unseemly jests of his were made all the less welcome by the fact that any manner of connexion the Fieldings might have with aristocracy came from this irreverent Clarkson's mother. In many ways it was a relief to the household in town and country when Clarkson was gone. He admired nothing that his father really admired, and that his elder brother was willing for the credit of the family to take on trust. He made caricatures of the paintings by Sir Thomas Lawrence ; he was always insinuating that the antique family furniture was bought brand-new in Tottenham Court Road ; he laughed at a supposed Raphael which it ought to have been an article of faith to accept as genuine ; and he did not care about Zachary Macaulay.

Once or twice at long intervals the good-humoured prodigal returned to London. But he did not visit his father or his brother ; and they did not even know of his having been so near to them. He lived where he pleased and as he pleased. He was fond of quoting a line from Savage Landor, about one who 'warmed both hands before the fire of life.' This was evidently what he believed himself to be doing. He liked the ups and downs of life ; he found a certain interest in receiving fortune's buffets as well as her rewards. He was free and happy. He was thousands of miles away from London when he heard of his father's death, and it was very old news when the tidings reached him. Then he was stricken with a sudden and a deep penitence. His emotional generous nature drove him into repentance. He had had some strokes of surprising good luck in one of the many speculations into which he successively flung himself in the American States ; but he threw up the occupation and hurried home, not particularly knowing what he wanted there. On returning to London he hastened to his father's house, no doubt with some thoughts on the way of that other penitent who once came back to the house of his father. At the very door he saw his brother, Sir Wilberforce Fielding, mounting his horse for a ride in the park. Sir Wilberforce looked at him, but did not recognise him ; had not even, it was evident, any

faint suspicion of ever having seen him before. Sir Wilberforce looked healthy, rosy, and very happy. The returned prodigal thought his own lamentations and repentances would have seemed ridiculously out of place under such circumstances. He allowed his brother to mount his horse and ride away undisturbed. He felt very much of a stranger in London then. Still, he thought as he was there he might as well stay for a little and see how his brother got on, and whether he was a person at all likely to be touched by a fraternal reconciliation. He went, seeking meanwhile for new sensations, in quest of some odd and interesting spot wherein to establish himself for the moment. Chance took him to Bolingbroke Place.

He followed his whim, as he had always done thus far, and settled there as a lodger with the other lodgers. The house looked grim and phantom-haunted, and he thought there ought to be legends there, and odd people and adventures. He loved his fellow-man, not indeed in the philanthropist's sense, although he was always ready to do a good turn for anyone, but in the sense that he liked to talk to any sort of fellow-man or woman, and to be for the moment hail-fellow-well-met with the same. He had 'run' life, as the Americans say, on that principle everywhere, and he had found delight in it. He did not see why he might not find some gratification in Bolingbroke Place too. He soon came to know its inmates and to be fond of them in a certain sense. He really had a strong liking for 'dear old Lefussis,' even while he laughed at him; he thought Janet the best creature in petticoats he had ever known; and he was interested in the blended cleverness and shortsightedness, the vanity, the ill-humours and the aspirations of Robert Charlton. He would, however, probably soon have had enough of all this and have left the place and gone somewhere else, possibly out of London altogether, but for the curious chance that threw in his way a young and handsome woman who bore the name of Vanthorpe. That name had some associations for him; and he was at once compelled to look with interest on the woman who bore it. Among all his varied experiences, he had never yet been really in love.

Robert Charlton had never before had to do with a thoroughly purposeless man. Such a personage it seemed to him he had undertaken to watch and to study when he set himself to follow the mysterious Fielding. Charlton's life had been narrow and monotonous to an almost incredible degree. He had hardly any acquaintances, and no friends. He had always been working hard, and had seen those around him, men and women, working hard

too for dear life. It was bewildering to him now beyond measure to notice the movements of Fielding, who, on this trying day, seemed absolutely not to know what to do with himself. Charlton had made up his mind that there must be something wrong about Fielding, and that a clue would be got to a discovery by watching him for a whole day and seeing where he went and what he did. So he watched Fielding into Kensington Gardens, where the idle young man sat by the Round Pond for at least two mortal hours, apparently doing nothing but lazily watching the ripples of the pool and the sportings of the water-fowl. At last Fielding got up; and Robert, welcoming any change, made haste to follow at a safe distance. But Fielding had not gone far before he stretched himself out on a seat and occupied himself in looking up at the trees and the faint blue of the spring sky. Charlton's life had been all too dull and narrow to allow him to cultivate any taste for grass and trees and skies; and the delicious sense of spring borne in that day on others by the soft west wind had no influence on him. Another hour went away in this fashion. Then Fielding got up and strode away as one who has made up his mind to do something. So indeed he had. It was not all idleness which had held him by the pond and under the trees; he was really thinking something out and making up his mind. He crossed rapidly the range of parks between Oxford Street and Great George Street, and he made for Westminster Bridge. It cost Robert Charlton some trouble to keep up with the tall young man, who seemed now as eager to get on as he had appeared anxious to kill time by idleness before. Across the bridge he went and pierced far into the south side. At last he came to a rather pretty-looking row or terrace of small houses, railed off from the rest of the street. There Fielding went up to a door, and knocked. He only remained a few minutes. He did not go in. Evidently, Charlton thought, the person he sought was not at home. Fielding strode on to Kennington Park, whither too Robert followed him; and there was another long lounge on a seat. Up again, and back to the house in the terrace. The same result apparently. Then Fielding went rapidly northward again. He was not going to wait any longer for the person in the terrace, Charlton thought. Robert lingered long enough to take mental note of the number of the house, and then followed. He came in sight of Fielding as the latter was crossing Westminster Bridge. He followed him into the Pall Mall region, and there Fielding turned into a French *restaurant*. Charlton was tired and very hungry, and would fain have had a morsel to eat, and he became savage in his heart with Fielding for entering the *restaurant*. That was another of Fielding's offences. But

Charlton would not turn in anywhere for anything to eat, or give up the chase so soon, although it was now late in the evening and dark. He hung about weary and dispirited to the lowest degree, until, after what seemed to him an almost unending time, Fielding came out. Again he made for the south side, and Charlton felt a glow of new vital power at the encouraging conviction that there really was some business of surpassing importance drawing Fielding to the house in the terrace. With fresh vigour he followed the chase. The same house; the same result. As Fielding left the door for the third time it occurred to Charlton that he might do something better now than merely follow him. When Fielding had disappeared he went boldly up to the house and knocked, and asked the servant who opened the door if Mr. Stephens—he took the first name that occurred to him—had been there that day? She didn't know, the girl said civilly; a gentleman had called three times, but she didn't know what his name was; she had not been living there long; he came to see Mrs. Clarkson, and Mrs. Clarkson weren't at home. He was coming again to-morrow. Robert said something about an appointment there to meet Mr. Stephens; but he supposed he had mistaken the hour. Did the gentleman who called three times ask for him—Mr. Green?—Robert's invention was taxed for a second name on the spur of the moment. No; the gentleman only asked for Mrs. Clarkson. Charlton thanked her for her civility and hurried away. He did not succeed in recovering the track of Fielding any more that evening, but he thought he had got at the beginning of a discovery of some kind. He did not fail to remember that some of the letters he had seen in Fielding's room were addressed to the name of Clarkson. It was evident that Fielding had sometimes passed by the name of Clarkson; and now he was paying three hasty and seemingly anxious visits in one day at the house of a person described as Mrs. Clarkson. Robert had read with keen interest in the papers about men carrying on brilliant and successful swindles by passing off under different names in different parts of England, and having the assistance of women confederates equally disguised. Why should not this be some instance of the kind? He was convinced that there was some mystery or other connected with that house on the Surrey side, and that he had come upon the track of it. In all the varied workings of conjecture in the human mind we do not know that there is any authentic record of anybody having reason to believe that anybody else is engaged in concealing something, and even for a moment supposing that the concealment has a worthy motive. It ought not to take much observation of life, one would think, to teach us that there are men and women who

do sometimes make secrets of what it would only be to their credit to have known. Charlton had in any case a suspicious nature, made more suspicious by his almost solitary, brooding, and unhealthy life. He was not likely to think that there could be any mystery connected with the house on the south side, the discovery of which would not be to the discredit and the confusion of Fielding.

He felt elate at first because he had got on the path to some mystery. The elation lasted him while he was taking a poor and hasty dinner in a small chop-house near Westminster Bridge, but as he sat there alone, in the dim light of the mean public-room after his meal, he began to think of how late it was, and how he had squandered a whole day from the work that in general he loved, and he wondered what Janet would think of his long absence. He thought of the possibility of Fielding arriving at Bolingbroke Place before him, and seeing Janet and hearing from her unsuspecting lips some expressions of amazement and alarm at his long absence. Then he thought of the kind of business to which he had given up so many hours, and how hideously unlike it was to anything he would once have pictured as the fitting occupation of one who aspired to be successful and distinguished, and he began to feel miserably humiliated. He began to think with a kind of horror that he must now henceforth sink down and down. He could not make up his mind for a long time to go home; he shrank from meeting Janet face to face. He wandered through lonely streets and hung over gloomy bridges, and gazed into sad waters, until suddenly the moon rose and made the river look bright, and he found the brightness unbearable and fled from it.

Janet was accustomed to go to bed early and leave her husband sitting up. She usually arranged a small supper for him, and then took herself off at some seemly hour, leaving him to outwatch the Bear if he felt inclined. It seemed to her only the proper and natural thing that a scholar, as she firmly believed her husband to be, should sit up to a late hour and read, unvexed by woman's chatter. But then, when she went to bed, Robert was always in the sitting-room, and there was the genial sense of his presence and his nearness. She could see his lamp full on, or at least could catch its light streaming into the room where she lay; and it was an assurance that her husband was near and was, one might say, keeping her company. More than once when she could not sleep she had glided softly out of bed and crept to the door of the room, and looked in upon him as he read or worked, and she felt happy because he was there and she could look on him. But this night Robert had not come home, and that was a strange thing to her. She had not seen him since the forenoon, and then his manner

was strange and hard and she did not understand him. The spell that Mrs. Vanthorpe was to work had clearly not begun to operate yet; but Robert and she were to spend an evening soon again with Mrs. Vanthorpe, and then, perhaps, something might come of it. So far, almost everything was unsatisfactory. Robert had never been out from his dinner before without Janet's knowing in advance that he was to be absent, and he had never been so late. She remained up beyond her usual time, and then she thought she had better go to bed lest Robert should be angry. So she made for him a very neat little supper out of the dinner that had been prepared in vain; and she wrote on a scrap of paper the not perhaps wholly coherent words, 'With Janet's love I'm gone to bed,' and so left the room. She spent a long time undressing and arranging her hair, the beautiful hair which it used to delight Robert so often to see her unfold and let loose around her shoulders, and which now she was arranging for the gratification of no one. At last, when she had protracted the process to the utmost reasonable limits, she went to bed and for a while lay awake, looking out on the light of the lamp in the sitting-room as it shone through her doorway. For she had lowered Robert's lamp, and she knew that the moment he came in he would turn it more fully on; and then, even if she had fallen asleep in the mean time, she would know the moment she opened her eyes again if he had come home. Often she closed her eyes and tried to make believe to herself that she was sleeping, and then opened them again in the hope that she might be gladdened by the stronger light, and she was each time disappointed. At last she really did fall asleep, and slept for at least two hours.

On first reawaking she forgot for the moment that Robert was not with her. Then, as consciousness began to struggle against lingering sleep, she thought he must be in the sitting-room; and then she became aware that the light was still low. She jumped out of bed, and, undressed as she was, ran into the sitting-room. The light was still low; Robert was not there. The little meal she had set out for him looked dismally full of ghastly suggestion as it lay there lonely and untasted. She looked at the little clock over the chimney-piece which Robert himself had tinkered at until he made it a very marvel of correct time-keeping, and she found that it was nearly half-past one. Then a reassuring thought occurred to her. Nothing was more likely than that her husband, when returning home, had seen Mr. Fielding's light burning in his room and gone in, and that they were now sitting together talking. The idea reassured her, but she was longing to be convinced that it was the truth. She feared her husband would be angry if she

seemed in any way to be looking after his movements; and yet she could not remain in the condition of uncertainty which then tormented her. She thought she would go out on the corridor and listen, and perhaps hear their voices—Mr. Fielding often talked out in a very loud pleasant sort of way; and if she did hear them she would go back to bed contented. She opened her door and crept out cautiously on the landing, a little astonished at first to find that the stairs were quite bright in the moonlight. She heard nothing, and so she went down a few more of the stairs and listened. When she came to the first lobby on her way down, the full moon suddenly looked in upon her through a window, and Janet was almost as much startled as if some ghost had appeared and turned the pale light of its wan eyes upon her. The little start, however, reminded her of other possibilities, and she thought she had better go no lower down then, for it would never do if Mr. Fielding or any other of the lodgers were to come upon her and see her in her night-dress. She hurried back to her room and put on clothes enough to make a colourable presentation of being fully dressed, and then softly went down the stairs again.

She stopped at Fielding's door in much trepidation. She listened, but for a time she could hear no sound except the quick beating of her heart. There was certainly a light inside, for she could see it streaming out under the door, but she could hear no voices. She was all trembling, and in her agitation she caught the handle of the door and it rattled loudly, and she heard some one start up inside. Her terror became unbearable. She was longing to fly from the spot and run madly up the stairs, but she could not move. At that moment the street door opened and her husband entered; and, in the same instant, the other door opened as well and Fielding stood before her.

'Janet!' Charlton cried, and his face became white and he caught her fiercely by the arm.

'Hullo, what are you two doing here?' Fielding said, not yet understanding the scene in the least.

'Oh, Robert, I was only looking for you; I thought you were here,' Janet moaned as she looked in terror into her husband's face and tried to twist herself from the tight clutch of his hand.

'I say, Charlton, take care,' Fielding said; 'you are hurting your wife. What are you about, man? Let go her arm.' At the same time Fielding put his hand on Charlton's shoulder. Charlton flung his wife from him and struck at Fielding wildly. Fielding put up his arm and stopped the blow.

'Oh, Mr. Fielding, don't mind him; oh, pray, pray don't!' Janet supplicated. 'He doesn't mean it; he doesn't know what



'Oh, Mr. Fiddler, I'm not a bit of a comedian'

W. H. H. 1896

he is doing.' Charlton, a little flushed at the consequences of his passionate outbreak, had fallen back a little, and seemed as if he were standing on the defensive.

'I believe he doesn't, indeed,' said Fielding. 'Don't be afraid, Janet; I shan't harm him. Look here, Charlton: hit one of your own size next, will you, there's a good fellow? Only Janet came between, I might have done you some harm, and I should have been sorry afterwards. And now will you tell me, if you are not mad or drunk, or mad and drunk, what this is all about?'

'I only came to see if you were there, Robert; that was all, indeed,' Janet pleaded piteously, looking up to Charlton, whose arm she held, with eyes in which simple truth shone yet more than even terror. Charlton had collected his senses now, and was quite satisfied in his own mind that she was speaking the truth.

'Well,' Fielding asked again, 'what is it all about? Have you been drinking more than was good for you, Charlton?'

He spoke with a certain sternness now that made Janet again move between him and her husband.

'It was all a mistake, Fielding,' Charlton said at last, gasping for breath; 'I haven't been drinking, but I came in suddenly and I couldn't imagine what Janet wanted here.'

'What a cad you make of yourself!' Fielding said composedly. 'I begin to think now that a kicking would have done you good. I am almost sorry I didn't follow my first impulse; if you had been a stronger man I would have done it.'

'I was in the wrong, Fielding; I admit it; I can only say that I am sorry and that I apologise.'

'Apologise to your wife,' Fielding said; 'you owe her an apology. When I ask you to apologise to me, you can do so. I have to apologise to you, Mrs. Charlton, for bursting out on you so suddenly and frightening you. I didn't know who was there; I heard some noises, and I have had an odd suspicion lately that people have been coming into my room. I am afraid I frightened you, and I ask you to forgive me.'

He looked handsome and brave and genial, and very like a gentleman then indeed. He must have appeared, even in loyal Janet's eyes, something of a contrast to Robert Charlton, who seemed small, cowering, and confused, and at the same time malign. Fielding bowed to Janet and went into his room, and the dejected pair were left to make their way up the silent stairs by the light of the moon, the sudden intrusion of whose great white face had so much alarmed Janet.

'I oughtn't to have gone down, Robert,' she began, when they had got into their room; 'I know I oughtn't, and it was all my

fault. Only for me this would not have happened; but I did not know where you were, and I was frightened, and I thought perhaps you might be with Mr. Fielding in his room as you are sometimes, you know; and so I went down, and then——'

The poor little beauty was really alarmed. She did not know what strange mood might show itself in her husband. Perhaps the mood she least expected was that which showed itself. Charlton sat down wearily, and seemed hardly to be listening to what she was saying. At last he lifted his head and spoke to her but without looking at her.

'It isn't any matter, Janet; I mean, I don't blame you; it was all my fault: I don't well know what I was thinking of when I saw you and saw him. Go to bed, dear, now; that's a good girl; go to bed, Janet.'

'I have kept your supper for you; it is your dinner, in fact,' Janet said, trying to look cheerful, and to put off leaving him. She longed now to throw her arms round him and kiss him, so dejected and deserted did he seem.

'Thank you, Janet—thank you. You saw how he treated me?' he said, changing his tone and suddenly looking up.

'Well, Robert dear, you know you lost your temper, and you were very wild, and Mr. Fielding is tall and strong.'

Janet would have said, if she could see her way to it, that Fielding, being attacked without rhyme or reason by her husband, had according to her feminine idea behaved with wonderful forbearance in not employing his superior strength at once against his assailant. But although she never could quite get at the man's point of view for most things she had a sort of suspicion that Robert would not care to hear much about forbearance of this kind. Still, it did seem to her that it was altogether Robert who had treated Mr. Fielding badly, not Mr. Fielding who had thus treated Robert.

'He didn't strike at me in return; you saw that?'

'Yes, I saw that, of course,' Janet said eagerly, rejoicing in the belief that her husband was after all looking at the thing in the right light, and about to launch into a panegyric on Fielding's magnanimity.

'Yes, of course you saw it,' Charlton said bitterly; 'and you heard too that he wouldn't receive an apology from me? You know why, I suppose?'

'Because he knew you didn't mean anything, Robert——'

'Because he considers me a cad; because he looks on me as beneath his notice, because I am not strong enough for him to strike, nor enough of a gentleman to be asked for an apology! Oh

yes, he thinks to degrade me in my own eyes and—and in your eyes, I dare say—yes, I dare say in your eyes—'

'Oh, Robert:' and Janet attempted a caress of assurance that nothing could degrade him in her eyes. If she had said that no one but himself could do it, and hardly even he, it would have been only a truthful expression of the poor soul's loyalty. He put away the caress.

'Yes; it was done to degrade me in—everybody's eyes; I dare say he will tell it to—everybody. How can I look—anybody in the face again?'

'But, Robert, who will know? There was nobody there; the people in the house were all in bed—'

'I wasn't thinking of the people in the house,' he caught her up almost fiercely. His quiet and broken mood seemed to be passing away.

Janet could do anything but restrain herself from trying to put things right where so useful an operation seemed to be within her power. She said in a soothing tone:—

'But, Robert, we don't know anybody out of the house except my aunt, and Mrs. Vanthorpe—and Mrs. Vanthorpe wouldn't care, you know, even if she did hear of it—which she won't.'

'Who is he,' Charlton said, jumping up, 'to give himself airs, I should like to know, and put on the ways of a gentleman, and think he has a right to call on people, on an equality, and not like me, taking orders for work? Who is he that has a right to degrade a man as good as himself in the eyes of—of people? I'll find out what he is—I'll show the world what he is. I'm on his track; I'll not fail, that I can tell him. I'll take down the pride of my gentleman. I have not had my suspicions for nothing. I'm glad I struck him. He can't deny that. Go to bed, Janet, it's no fault of yours. You are a good girl, much too good—never mind, only go to bed just now.'

Poor Janet could do nothing but creep to bed and feel very miserable. She did not go to sleep, but lay wondering why things all seemed to turn out so unpleasantly. She was uneasy about Robert's change of moods, and once she stole out of bed and peeped into the room where he sat. He had his head in his hands, and he was crying; positively crying, like a child or a woman. Never in her life had Janet before thought of the possibility of a man crying for anything but perhaps the death of some one he loved. She ran to her husband and flung herself on the ground at his knees and clasped him in her arms, and begged of him in sobbing tones to tell her what was the matter.

'The matter is,' he said at last, 'that I am a fool, Janet, and

not like myself to-night. I ought to apologise to you for putting you out so, and I do apologise, Janet. You won't refuse to accept my apology, will you ?'

They had no more trouble for that night ; but Gabrielle Vanthorpe's spell did not seem thus far to be working with great success for the happiness of the Charltons.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

MAY 1879.

Donna Quixote.

BY JUSTIN M^CCARTHY.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOUSE ON THE SURREY SIDE.

NEXT day, Fielding set out again for the house on the Surrey side. He had made up his mind to have some good reason for telling Gabrielle all that he knew about her husband's brother, or for telling her nothing.

No doubt was now on his mind that the Vanthorpe he had known was the brother of Albert Vanthorpe. It was in Vera Cruz he first met the young Englishman, Philip Vanthorpe. They were drawn together first by their kinship of race, and afterwards by something kindred in character and in their personal history. Vanthorpe was not long without telling Fielding that he had left his home when a mere boy, simply because he could not get on with his mother, and did not like his domestic life. Vanthorpe seemed in many respects a deeper and darker copy of Fielding; the traits of the outlaw were more harshly marked in him; and he had not Fielding's bright companionable careless ways, and his sunny temper. They became close friends, and made many mining, hunting, and other enterprises together. Vanthorpe still intended to go back and live in England some time; Fielding had no purpose of any kind. Vanthorpe told Fielding he was resolved to change his name, and did not know what other to take. 'Take my first name,' said Fielding. 'I don't want it; I never liked it, but it has brought you and me together, for I might never have left my father if he had not called me Clarkson.' The humour of the thing pleased both of them, and Philip Vanthorpe became thenceforward Philip Clarkson.

They were separated for a time, but they met again in New Orleans. A great change had taken place in Vanthorpe's fortunes; he had married an adventuress from Europe. Some said she had

been a music-hall singer; others that she had been a barmaid in a London public-house. Fielding could easily see that she was low London, anyhow. She was handsome, vulgar, very coquettish, and very clever in a sort of way. Vanthorpe had married her in a moment of wild admiration; she made him very miserable; he was repenting at leisure, and now told Fielding that his mind was made up; that he never would return to England. He grew melancholy and penitent; he began to think with regret of his home and his younger brother Albert, and even of the mother with whom he had quarrelled; but he would not attempt any reconciliation now. He was never very robust in constitution, and his present life was telling heavily on him. He and his wife had one child, a boy. After a while Fielding left the Southern States, not expecting ever to see Vanthorpe again. He gave Vanthorpe an address in London which would always find him. The very day of the concert at Lady Honeybell's, and after he had seen Gabrielle there, he received a letter from 'Paulina Clarkson,' telling him that her husband had been some months dead, and that she had come to London with her son for the purpose of finding out her husband's family.

The news of poor Vanthorpe's death was not much of a surprise. Fielding might have expected such an announcement soon. Nor under the circumstances was it wholly painful. It was better perhaps thus than later. But the coming of Vanthorpe's wife to London made it very hard for Fielding to know how to meet Gabrielle's questions, and helped to render his visit to her at her house specially embarrassing. After he had left Gabrielle he made up his mind to a course which he tried to follow that day; as we know, Robert Charlton watched him. He failed in seeing the lady who signed herself Paulina Clarkson that day, and now he is making another attempt. This time he is successful. Mrs. Clarkson was at home. He was shown into a little parlour decorated with a mirror the gilt frame whereof was veiled in yellow gauze, and with engravings of the 'Seasons' and of the capture of Delhi, the elephants being specially prominent in the latter work of art, as if they were dignified authorities directing and inspecting the capture. Fielding stood there thinking of the very different meeting which he was expecting only the day before while he waited for Gabrielle, and looking forward with much dislike to that now about to open. He had to wait a considerable time; and then at last he was privileged to hear a mighty rushing of silken skirts down the narrow staircase, and a tall woman with a long train occupied rather than entered the little room.

She was very tall; she had been very handsome; she was no longer quite young, but she still kept up a tolerable—perhaps it

would be proper to say a colourable—imitation of youth. Her hair was now dark brown, but had evidently undergone occasional changes of hue. She had a very long neck, and, for all her fine figure, occasionally reminded one of a rocking-horse, and occasionally of a giraffe. She had splendid arms, and her sleeves were made loose in order to do them justice. Fielding's first thought, on seeing her, was to wonder grimly how Gabrielle Vanthorpe would like her sister-in-law. Perhaps it was this thought that made him stand silent after the lady had entered the room and show no great joy at seeing her.

‘Why, Fielding, how you have changed!’ was her first greeting, and she held out both hands to him. He merely touched one.

‘You don't seem very glad to see me, Mr. Fielding?’ She drew close beside him as he stood near the chimney-piece, and tried to fix him with her eyes.

‘I don't think I am particularly glad to see you.’

‘I have a name, Fielding, haven't I?’

‘I beg your pardon; Mrs. Clarkson.’

‘Mrs. Clarkson! Why not Paulina?’

‘Stuff!’ was Fielding's ungracious answer. ‘I never called you Paulina in my life.’ He was almost inclined to add, ‘and I don't believe your godfathers and godmothers did either.’

‘My husband is dead,’ she said. ‘You were his friend; you might be a little more kind to his widow.’

In truth, it was Fielding's memory of Vanthorpe and of their friendship that made him harsh to the woman now before him. He put on a less ungenial manner, however, and heard her tell the story of Vanthorpe's death, which, with a prudent preparation against possible scepticism, she had had attested by formal certificates. She told how he had left but little money, and a few gold chains and ornaments and jewels, and how she had made up her mind to come to London, and find out his people, and see if they would not receive her. The story was long, and was interrupted by many little outbursts of emotion, and the exhibition of a good deal of impatience and anger. She saw that Fielding did not believe in her tears and her professed grief for her husband, and she occasionally told him so with renewed protestations and outbursts of anger, and now and then an oath. All the time he was thinking—‘How can I allow this creature and *her* to come together?’

‘Well, Mr. Fielding,’ she said at last, ‘why don't you say something? I have told you all my story; you used to have talk enough, I remember, when you liked it. Can't you say something now that you know what I want of you?’

‘I wish you had not come to London at all,’ he said. ‘I cannot

see why you did come. Why didn't you remain where you were known, and where you must have had some friends ?'

'What friends could a widowed woman have like her husband's mother? Haven't I got great folks for relations? Ain't they bound to do something for me and for his child? Come, Mr. Fielding, I ask you that. You think yourself very clever. Just you explain that to me: why shouldn't I seek out my husband's mother and his family?'

'But you don't know who they are, or where they are, and you are not likely to know from me, unless under conditions such as it seems to me right to impose on you.'

'You would impose on me fast enough, I dare say,' she said, affecting to misunderstand his words. 'But you are not likely to do that, Mr. Fielding, with all your knowledge. I mayn't have much book-learning, but I am not to be imposed on by any fine talk.'

'All the same, you can't help yourself.'

'I don't know, Mr. Fielding; that remains to be seen. I know very well that my husband's name wasn't Clarkson.'

'Yes, of course you know that; there never was much of a secret made about that.'

'I dare say I could change the name soon enough if I wanted to,' she said, turning to the looking-glass.

He caught at the words.

'That is just one reason why I came here to-day,' he said, 'and why I spent so much time in looking you up yesterday. I took it for granted that you would be trying for a husband in London. Now, I am not particularly fond of flattering women——'

'You certainly never were fond of flattering me,' she interposed with a little shrilly laugh.

'Very good. Then I may have the less hesitation in saying that you are quite attractive and young enough to have a good chance of getting someone to fall in love with you——'

'Positively a compliment, and from Mr. Fielding—the first he ever paid me. I like it, Fielding, I can assure you.' A flush of gratified vanity passed over her face. She looked natural for the first moment during their talk. That touch of nature that makes the whole world kin is not spoken of by the poet tenderly or pathetically, as those who quote from him generally seem to think, but only in irony. Such a touch of nature as Shakespeare's Ulysses meant to describe now made this woman kin to many better and some worse of her sex. She forgot her affectation, and her deceits, and her habitual perfidy, in the little instant of unexpected gratification to her vanity.

Fielding went steadily on.

‘And I should think you don’t want to be always encumbered with a child. A man may be willing to marry a widow who would think twice before taking her if he had to take a child as well. You know that, I suppose?’

‘Mr. Fielding, what a low opinion of human nature you must have! You quite astonish me.’ The affectation had all come back again.

‘Well, what I have to say is this. If I can arrange to have your husband’s child taken care of by his people, will you give it up? will you go away, or get married, and not trouble them?’

‘I do declare, Fielding, you have positively no feeling. Do you think a mother’s heart is like that?’

‘You needn’t try any of that on me,’ Fielding answered. ‘Keep it for the new admirer, whoever he is. It may take him in; it hasn’t the least effect on me. I know that you would rather have your own comfort and your own way than all the children in the world. Your husband knew that as well as I do. He knew that you didn’t care twopence for the child as compared with yourself and your own pleasures.’

‘Well,’ she said composedly, ‘I never went in for much of the sentimental; that’s true enough. But I don’t quite see why the child should be taken away from me. Why can’t they receive us both—me and the child?’

‘They may receive you both if they like; I have no control over that. But what I say is, that I will have nothing to do with introducing you to them; and that I don’t think you are the sort of person to have the bringing up of your husband’s child. You know very well whether he thought so.’

‘I know he didn’t think so, and I know who put him up to it. I know who was always talking against me. It was you, Fielding; it was you. You never saw anything good in me. You were always putting him against me. Was that manly conduct, Mr. Fielding, I ask of you? Was that like a man?—you who are always talking so fine about right and wrong, and this, that, and the other! Was it, I want to know?’

She was angry now, and the affectation was gone again. A touch of nature of another kind was illustrating the universal kinship. She looked much handsomer when angry than she did when affecting genteel indifference.

‘I never spoke to him against you,’ Fielding said, ‘and you know that well enough. It was by my advice that he did not take his child and leave you long ago; and I don’t know now whether my advice wasn’t a mistake. I didn’t think very badly of you then; I thought you were heartless and vain——’

‘Oh, dear me, what compliments! What a nice way for a gentleman to speak to a lady!’

‘But that was all I thought of you. I saw you after trying to establish a flirtation over his sick bed with the doctor who was attending him. You were ready to make love to anyone behind his back; you won’t deny that to me, I suppose?’

She grew pale with anger.

‘Mr. Fielding, your conduct is most ungentlemanlike, I must say. A gentleman never makes such allusions as that. If a lady takes a foolish liking, out of a mere whim, not meaning any harm, it’s a compliment to a gentleman; and no gentleman ever thinks of throwing it in her face. I never before was treated so in all——’

‘In all your experiences?’

‘No, I wasn’t going to say that; I hardly know what I was going to say, you put one out so. Anyhow, it ain’t the part of a gentleman; oh, there, I mean it isn’t the part of a gentleman, and that I will say. But it’s no use bringing up all these old stories, and quarrelling over things. Why can’t we be friends, Fielding? Why must you be my enemy?’

‘I am not your enemy,’ Fielding said more gently. ‘I would serve you if I could, for the sake of old acquaintance, and for the sake of your husband who was my friend. I felt a strong friendship for him. I could not be your friend, for you know that I think you spoiled his life, and that only for you he would have been happy, and might be alive now. But I want to help you, if I can; and the offer I make is a proof of it.’

‘An offer to take away my child from me?’

‘You don’t care about the child; and you know you are not the person to bring up a child. Come; I am not acting the part of an enemy to you. Think this over, and I’ll come again; but remember, you can only get to know your husband’s name, or anything about him, through me.’

She dropped into a chair, and folded her arms, and looked up at him with saucy half-closed eyes.

‘Mr. Fielding,’ she said, ‘just you listen. I ain’t quite come to that yet. When all else fails, and I haven’t any other hope left of finding out my husband’s people, then I may talk to you about your terms. But for the present I don’t see any necessity. I am only just beginning, don’t you know; and there are lots of ways of finding out things in London; and there’s no end of chances and strokes of good luck and what not, and I can wait a little. I may not want your help at all. If I find out the people, *I am quite clever enough to play a goody-goody part if that suits*

them ; and I won't tell any stories on myself, you may be sure. I mayn't be as clever as you, Mr. Fielding ; but I'm clever enough to know that the game isn't exactly played out yet. So that's my answer, Mr. Fielding, and I hope you'll not consider me rude.'

They were both playing a game of brag. Fielding was not so confident as he professed to be about the impossibility of her finding out her husband's people except through him. She was less confident about the chances of her being able to do without him than she would have admitted. She looked at his composed face, and a wave of passion darkened her whole expression. She suddenly changed her manner of affected contempt and carelessness for one of intense anger.

'Fielding,' she said, jumping up from her chair, 'I sometimes think I hate you : I do hate you.'

'I don't mind,' he said ; 'I am not trying to injure you.'

'You are trying to injure me ; you hate me, and you always did. You had better take care.'

At this moment the servant entered, bringing a little tray with some cups and saucers, and went out again. Paulina came over to Fielding, and touched him on the arm, and spoke with an odd affected laugh :

'I am going to have a cup of tea ; I am quite the lady, Fielding, as you see ; I must have my afternoon tea. I mix it after a fashion of my own ; quite particular. You will have a cup, won't you, for old acquaintance' sake, and because we are so very friendly together and so fond of one another ? '

She had moved a little away, and was standing now with her side turned to him, and was engaged in mixing the tea at a small table close to the wall. He could not see her preparations, but a faint peculiar smell was perceptible which was certainly not familiar to Fielding in connection with the making of tea.

'See,' she said, turning towards him, 'I have poured a cup for you. It can't be a cup of kindness, I suppose, as the song says ; but it may be a cup of unkindness. Anyhow, you won't refuse a lady, I'm sure, Mr. Fielding.'

For a moment it occurred to Fielding that she might have taken it into her head to poison him ; perhaps even to poison herself at the same time. He rejected both ideas in a moment, for what seemed to him good reasons.

'You don't like to drink it ? You are afraid ? ' she said with a laugh.

'I shall never get any good of her if she thinks she can make me afraid of her,' Fielding thought. 'Thank you,' he replied ; 'I like tea at all times ; I was going to ask you to give me a cup.'

‘Indeed! and of my own particular mixture?’ She still held the cup in her hand, as if playing with his feelings.

‘Any mixture you like,’ he answered carelessly. ‘I have drunk all sorts of decoctions for tea in all sorts of places. I am sure yours will be far more agreeable than most of them.’

‘Perhaps you won’t find it so; perhaps you won’t like it quite so much as you imagine.’

‘Oh, yes, thank you; I am sure I shall like it well enough.’ He stretched his hand out for the cup.

‘I ought to drink first, I suppose, being the lady,’ she said. ‘But as you are the guest and the stranger, Fielding, perhaps you will lead the way?’

‘Certainly, if you wish it. True politeness consists, I have always heard, in pleasing one’s hostess.’

‘You really will have it?’ She fixed her eyes so keenly on him that he could see the pupils contracting. He took the cup from her hand and bowed to her. The eyes were still fastened on him. He drank the tea. It had a somewhat peculiar perfume, but no peculiarity of taste.

‘What would you say if I told you there was poison in that?’ she asked.

‘Say I didn’t believe it,’ Fielding answered composedly as he handed back the cup.

‘You are not afraid?’

‘Not the least in the world.’

‘Let me feel your pulse.’

He stretched out his wrist to her. She felt his pulse carefully, all the time keeping her eyes maliciously fixed on him. Then she dropped his hand.

‘It’s all right enough,’ she said. ‘You don’t seem to be put out at all. Yet, I suppose you wouldn’t much like to be poisoned, would you?’

‘No, I shouldn’t like to be poisoned. First of all, I like being alive; next, I fancy all poisons are more or less painful. But I am not a bit afraid of being poisoned by you just now.’

‘Why not? Do you think I am too sweet and good for such a thing? If so, Mr. Fielding, you do me too much honour.’

‘Not I; you know very well I don’t think you too sweet and good to do anything that could be done safely and with any advantage to yourself. But it wouldn’t be quite safe perhaps to poison anyone in London; and besides, you have still some hope of getting at your husband’s people through me; and if you were to poison me your only chance would be gone.’

She laughed. ‘You are a clever fellow, Fielding; I always said

so. I always liked you, although you never liked me. No; I was not trying to poison you; I was only trying to put you into a fright. The stuff that smelt so in the cup had no harm in it. I may poison somebody some day, perhaps—I may poison myself, as like as not—but not just yet. I am not so much down upon my luck as all that. I ain't quite an old woman yet, Mr. Fielding. I mean, I am not quite an old woman. Don't you remember what fun you and Phil used to make of me for saying "I ain't"? I am trying to be quite genteel now.'

'I remember Clarkson trying to cure you of many bad habits,' Fielding said sternly; 'I am glad if he succeeded in any of his attempts.'

'My! aren't we severe? Well, as I was saying, Mr. Fielding, when you interrupted me—rudely, too, for such a teacher of politeness—I'm not quite an old woman yet,' and she glanced coquettishly at the mirror over the chimney-piece. 'There are persons who might admire me yet, although Mr. Fielding don't—I mean, does not. Some people find a young widow very attractive, eh, Mr. Fielding?'

Fielding's eyebrows involuntarily contracted. There was something in the words that grated on his ear. They sounded like the hint of a blasphemy. She was quick to see that her unmeaning words had hit him somehow.

'Well, if I don't think you must be in love with a young widow yourself! I've made a hit, have I? I shall be jealous presently, Mr. Fielding.'

Fielding recovered his composure.

'Very well,' he said, and he prepared to go away; 'find out without me if you can.'

'All right,' she answered with seeming carelessness; 'keep the secret from me, Master Fielding, if you can.'

'I shall not come any more unless you send for me, and perhaps not even then. Remember that.'

'My compliments to the pretty widow. I'm sure there is a pretty widow,' was her somewhat irrelevant reply. She was in a mocking humour now, and he knew it, and he saw that nothing was to be gained for his purpose by any further talk.

When Fielding had gone, she abandoned herself deliberately to a frantic outburst of passion. She cried, she laughed hysterically, she stamped, she seized a bonnet that lay on a table and flung it on the floor and trod upon it again and again, she threw herself on the sofa, and that not appearing to be relief enough she threw herself on the ground and writhed and wallowed there as if she were in tortures of bodily pain. When at last she got up, her hair

was all loose about her shoulders; her dress, which she had torn and clutched at in her frenzy, was all disordered; but she seemed to have recovered some self-control. She looked in the glass, and indulged in a sharp little laugh.

‘My! what a fright I am,’ were her first words. ‘There, that’s done me good; I’m better now.’

She began putting up her hair before the glass, and she talked to herself meanwhile.

‘No, Master Fielding, you are very clever, I dare say, but you don’t get over me quite so soon or so easy. If they are so very anxious to get rid of me, all the worse for them, and all the better for me. I do believe there is some widow that my fine Master Fielding is looking after. I think I made a hit there. I hate her whoever she is, and I hate him too.’

There were some symptoms of a renewal of the passion-fit at these words; but the woman shook her shoulders and said vehemently, ‘No, I won’t,’ as if she were compelling her temper to give a command to itself; and she kept her word, and did not break out again. Nearly half an hour had passed in her fever fit and her recovery; and just then the maid came and told her that a gentleman who had been there the day before had come again, and was asking after another gentleman who he said had made an appointment to meet him there.

‘You fool, there has no gentleman made any appointment here,’ she answered angrily. ‘Don’t you know that as well as I do? Go and tell him so; send him out of that. . . . No, don’t,’ she said suddenly, bethinking her that it might be someone who knew Fielding. ‘No, don’t, Annie; I’ll see him. Let him wait a moment.’

She ran upstairs to repair the ravages that her passionate mood had made in her hair, her eyes, and her dress; and Robert Charlton was shown into the sitting-room. He was looking very nervous and uneasy. His thin hands trembled, and he could hardly keep his lips steady. He had followed Fielding, had seen him enter the house, and waited until Fielding came out and disappeared. Then he presented himself with his story about an appointment with a gentleman there. He was determined if possible to get to speech of the mysterious Mrs. Clarkson; and now that his desire was about to be so easily accomplished his heart was failing him. If he could have got out of the place at once he would; only, no doubt, to find his determination to see the adventure through return the moment he had crossed the threshold outward. He was still thinking what he should say, when he heard a great rustling and trailing of silks, in itself enough to *make a timid man* dread the coming interview; and in a moment

Mrs. Clarkson swept into the room, and bewildered him with a low curtesy and a glance from her glittering eyes. The lady was not impressed by the appearance of her visitor. He looked mean, and small, and frightened. His nervous agitation showed her, however, that he was not an ordinary visitor come on everyday business. To Charlton she seemed a most formidable personage. She was decidedly taller than he; and with a silk dress that clung to her figure and showed every movement of her limbs, and trailed a yard behind her on the ground, she appeared like some siren or sorceress, or other supernatural and unmanageable creature. If there was one thing more than another that Charlton shrank from, it was talking to a woman taller than himself. He was wretchedly sensitive about his short stature, and was not fond of coming into comparison with tall men; but to stand beside a tall woman filled him with a sense of unspeakable humiliation.

She did not relieve his embarrassment by saying anything, but allowed him to begin his story as he would. He dropped all his little fable about the appointment, and stammered out that he was very anxious to know if it was a Mr. Fielding he had seen coming out of the house a short time before. To say the truth, he fully expected to hear that Fielding was known by some other name there.

Yes, she answered graciously; that was Mr. Fielding: did he know him? Did he wish to see him? Mr. Fielding did not live there; he was only an acquaintance. He very seldom came. What did he wish to know about Mr. Fielding?

‘If his name is Fielding,’ Charlton said, driven to his wits’ end, but having a sudden instinct that he could thus excite her curiosity. He was right.

‘Do you know him by any other name? Does anybody?’ she asked sharply.

‘I have reason to think he has been known by other names,’ Charlton said, becoming a little more composed.

‘I should like to know all about him,’ she said eagerly. ‘I only knew him as Fielding. We knew him in New Orleans and other places in America, my husband and I——my husband is dead now.’

‘Oh,’ Charlton said, a sort of light breaking in on him. ‘Then your name is Vanthorpe, isn’t it? Your husband’s name was Vanthorpe.’

‘My husband’s name was Clarkson; at least, I only knew him as Clarkson. What name did you say?’

‘Vanthorpe. Fielding told me of a young man he knew in the South whose name was Vanthorpe, and who was an Englishman

of good family—a little wild, and all that; and there was some mystery or other about him; and I fancy he has relations here in London; and Fielding knows them.'

The tall woman caught him by both hands with a sudden energy that almost frightened him.

'You are the very man I want,' she exclaimed. 'I say, what good angel sent you here? Sit down; tell me all about them. I have come to London express to find them out; and Fielding won't tell me. I say, is any one of them a young widow?'

'There's Mrs. Vanthorpe,' Charlton said, not without feeling his cheeks tingle with shame; 'Gabrielle her name is.'

'Gabrielle? Indeed! Is she a widow? and young?'

'She is a widow, and young.'

'Handsome?'

'Very handsome.'

She clapped her hands together.

'I thought so—I knew it! Well, look here; tell, me who is she?'

'Who is she?'

'Just so, exactly. Who is she? What is she to me? She is one of the family, you say?'

'Oh, yes! I understand. Well, if your husband really was the Vanthorpe Fielding knew——'

'He was, I tell you; he must have been.'

'Then this Mrs. Vanthorpe must be your husband's sister-in-law. She was married to your husband's brother; he is dead this year or more.'

'Gracious! well, I never! She is my sister-in-law: shan't we be such friends! Now, Master Fielding, with all your cleverness, you shall find me a great deal too many for you. Now, look here, my friend; what do you want in all this? You can do me no end of good, but I want to see exactly who you are and why you come here. I don't suppose *you* are after the young widow, are you? Come, tell me out your motive like a man! You are in my power already, you know. I could tell Fielding. Come, what's your little game? You may trust me; I have had many a secret told to me before now.'

Charlton began to feel himself in the position of one who has sold his life to utter degradation, and who must only go down and down farther into the depths. Step by step he had been descending since the unlucky hour when he first thought of searching among Fielding's papers. He was now entered as a regular accomplice in a vile plot of some kind with a woman who already, after ten minutes' conversation, told him she had him in her power. For aught he could tell, she might have it in her will and her power to

murder him. Like most hard-working Londoners, he knew little of any quarter of London but his own, and he had a vague impression that somewhere on the Surrey side all the robberies, swindles, and murders were planned and prepared. With a sense of indescribable humiliation he gave the woman to understand that he had suspected Fielding of some mysterious and lawless goings-on, that he had quarrelled with Fielding, and been insulted by him, and that he had set himself to watch Fielding in order to find out all about him. When he had done his story he felt as though earth did not contain in all its unnumbered springs of running water enough of the pure fluid to wash him clean of stain again.

‘All right,’ said she, ‘you’ll do,’ when she had got out of him every scrap of information he could give. ‘Do you want to make money out of this?’

He told her in anger—his anger gave him momentary courage—that he did not want to make money, and she was amused at his earnestness. She asked him for his address, saying she might want him again. He hesitated and faltered, but she reminded him that she could tell Fielding the whole story, and put Fielding up to find him out, and the miserable Charlton gave her his address, and had to explain to her who he was, and how he came to know Fielding, and about his occupation, and about his having a wife.

‘If I should want you, and you don’t come at once,’ she said with a laugh, and greatly enjoying his wretchedness, ‘I can go and call on your wife, you know, and have a talk with her over the whole affair. Of course you have no secrets from your wife; I may open my mind to her?’

Charlton saw that she despised him and was making sport of him. He left her, and turned homewards with a sickening sensation as if he were some contaminated wretch unfit to come near the dwellings of wholesome men. As he crossed Westminster Bridge, and looked at the dark water, he thought for a moment that if it were not for Janet he would drown himself, and then it came on him in bitterness that it would be almost better for Janet if he were lying dead under that water; but he only hurried from the sight of the river. It was too dark and fearful; he had not the courage to look on it any longer.

CHAPTER XIV.

‘A FRIEND TO HER FRIEND.’

MUCH happiness had come to Miss Elvin. Lady Honeybell had called on Gabrielle, and had been very kind to the young singer, and had even asked her to pass a few days at her house. Miss

Elvin, in high delight, had gone home to Camberwell, to make preparations for accepting this momentous invitation: Lady Honeybell had even been gracious enough to say that Professor Elvin must also come and see her. Mr. Taxal, too, had called more than once, and been very friendly. The singer began to see life like the opening of the bright transformation scene in the pantomime.

Lady Honeybell's chief motive in her act of kindness was to oblige Gabrielle, for whom she had taken a sudden but very strong regard. Gabrielle's story had touched her in the beginning, and now she was charmed with Gabrielle herself. She did not, in truth, much like the little singer so far, but she thought it would at the worst be a good thing to take her off that poor dear young Mrs. Vanthorpe's hands.

The new change opening for Miss Elvin made Gabrielle feel relieved and happy; she had time to think of other objects of interest—of Claudia Lemuel, who declined to be called 'Miss;' of Janet Charlton; and of Fielding, and his untold story about Albert's brother, and the sort of mystery about himself. One morning, therefore, Gabrielle set out for Bolingbroke Place. She had looked up some new and particularly dainty work for Charlton to do, and she wanted to have some friendly talk with Janet if Charlton should happen to be out of the way. It was a bright pure day, pure even in London—one of those tantalizing days which come as spring is softening into summer, and which seem to bear the very essence of immortal summer on their breath. It was a day when the mere sense of living is happiness enough to many, and Gabrielle felt so glad in the soft sun that she must go and do something or say something kindly to someone or her sense of delight would be insupportable. It is not unlikely that she was thinking, too, of the possibility of meeting Fielding. She thought about him a good deal on the way, for Major Leven had made it his duty to tell her all he knew about Fielding. Good kindly Major Leven was under the impression that he had put Gabrielle enough on her guard when he told her that Fielding had voluntarily withdrawn from respectability and discipline, and had left his home in consequence. The story only raised Fielding unspeakably in Gabrielle's eyes. Mrs. Leven was not entirely wrong in her conjecture. 'I always knew there was something in him. I always knew he was not like commonplace people,' was Gabrielle's internal comment even while Major Leven was striving to impress her with a sense of the impropriety of encouraging the acquaintance of such a social outlaw.

She found Janet alone, and worse than alone—lonely—and much depressed. Everything seemed to be going badly with them, poor

Janet said. Robert had not been the same lately at all ; he did not trouble her now so much about fancied admirers, but he was always unhappy, and he was very often away. Janet did not tell the story of what had happened the night of the scene with Fielding. She was far too loyal to betray what ought to be kept to herself, even if Gabrielle were not too loyal to invite any such confidences ; but Gabrielle learned quite enough to know that things were not going well, and that the poor little beauty was unhappy. One thought occurred to Gabrielle at once. Perhaps Charlton was poorer than he cared to tell his wife. He was proud of spirit ; perhaps the humiliation of being in want was more than he could bear. Perhaps his very affection for Janet was one reason why he seemed so changed towards her.

After a while Robert himself came in looking weary and scared and miserable. He became still more confused on seeing Gabrielle, and cast an inquiring glance at his wife, as if he were wondering what and how much she might have been telling to their visitor.

Gabrielle talked for a while with him about the work she had brought him to do. He tried to seem at his ease, and to be at once courteous and independent. But he was unmistakably restless and nervous. Janet found some occasion for leaving the room ; she had still some faith in the possibility of a word from Mrs. Vanthorpe working wonders. Gabrielle seized the opportunity, and came to the point in her quick kindly way.

‘I am afraid Janet is very unhappy, Mr. Charlton.’

‘Does she say so ?’ he asked.

‘She doesn’t complain, if you mean that ; but surely you can see that she is unhappy.’

‘I wonder who is happy ?’ he said, with an effort to be at once tragic and not ridiculous. ‘I am not.’

‘No,’ said Gabrielle eagerly ; ‘and don’t you see that that is the very reason why she is not ? I can see well enough that you are unhappy, Mr. Charlton, and of course she must see it. Oh, yes, excuse me if I seem to jump to conclusions about you ; I only mean to be friendly. You are not happy, and of course she is not. I think about her very much. Tell me—is it anything in which friendship is of any use ? you both have friends.’

‘I never had any friends,’ he said gloomily.

‘Come, now, you must not be unjust. I know you have friends ; you have one friend at least.’

She spoke with as frank an earnestness as if she were talking to Major Leven.

‘Tell me,’ she went on, ‘is there anything I can do ? I would do a great deal for Janet, if I only knew how. I think there is so

much that a friend might do if people would not misunderstand each other.'

Charlton got up from his chair. He dreaded to hear her offer to help him and Janet with money. That would show what she thought of him, he said to himself. He was always telling himself what she thought of him—that she only considered him a humble follower and a poor devil, but not the less did he dread the words coming from her own lips to convince him of what he already knew.

'We have never been the same here,' he said, 'since that man Fielding came among us.'

Gabrielle coloured and felt herself growing as nervous as he was. Was this to be some story of jealousy and of Janet? She cordially wished now she had not spoken.

'Why do you speak against Mr. Fielding?' she asked with a coldness that he might have thought ominous if he had had his senses more about him.

'I don't know; there is something unlucky about him. We have never been the same since he came here. I don't believe his name is Fielding. I know he goes by other names; such fellows always do. I hope you don't let him push his acquaintance on you, Mrs. Vanthorpe; he is not a person for a lady like you to know. I believe he is one of a gang of swindlers that I have read about in the papers, and I'll expose him——'

Gabrielle had been listening in perfect amazement. At this point she rose from her chair.

'I am sorry to hear you speak in this way,' she said. 'I thought you called yourself a friend of Mr. Fielding?'

'No, Mrs. Vanthorpe, I don't call him a friend——'

'I do call him a friend,' Gabrielle said emphatically, 'and I know he is a gentleman, and I am sure he is a man of honour; and your talk, Mr. Charlton, is unworthy of you, and disgraceful—yes, I call it disgraceful, and nothing else.'

Charlton looked up bewildered. At this moment Janet came into the room again, and Gabrielle went towards her to say a kindly word or two lest she should think herself included in the anger bestowed upon her husband. There had been a knock at the door which for the moment no one had heeded, and presently Fielding entered the room. He only saw Robert at first.

'Look here, Charlton,' he said, 'I fancy I was a little rude to you the other night, and I come to say I am sorry for it. You were a little off your head at the moment about something or other, and I ought to have made allowance for that, and I don't believe I did, and I should like to apologise.'

At this moment he saw Gabrielle. A silence fell upon the group. Janet was dimly aware that her husband had in some way incurred Mrs. Vanthorpe's anger. Charlton did not venture to put on an appearance of friendship to Fielding under Gabrielle's eyes. Gabrielle was divided between anger and curiosity. Fielding was the first to speak.

'I beg your pardon, Mrs. Vanthorpe; I did not see you before. I came here to offer an apology to this surly old Charlton—this old young Charlton. You must have heard me talking of an apology, and I ought to say that I came to offer an apology, not to ask for one.'

'Do you really owe Mr. Charlton an apology?' Gabrielle asked, looking not at Fielding but at Charlton.

'That I do,' Fielding answered cheerily. 'We both lost our tempers a little, I fancy; but there was nothing to disturb me, and so I had no excuse. I dare say Mrs. Charlton thought us a pretty pair of fools.'

'Mr. Fielding feels bound as a gentleman to offer an apology when he thinks he has done wrong,' Gabrielle said with a certain emphasis. 'Do you owe Mr. Fielding any apology, Mr. Charlton?'

'Not he,' Fielding said, striking in good-humouredly; 'he was a little surprised and confused at the time. You see, Mrs. Vanthorpe, when one of two people is not surprised or excited, I hold him to be responsible for all that happens. It's like the steamer and the sailing ship, you know; the steamer is master of itself, and can go fast or slow as it will, and turn any way it likes, and so it must keep out of the sailing vessel's course.'

Fielding and Charlton had shaken hands. Charlton kept his eyes down, and only muttered a word or two. Fielding ascribed his awkwardness to the consciousness that he had also been in the wrong and made a fool of himself. He pushed the whole controversy out of the way, therefore, as fast as he could.

'I wish to speak to you, Mr. Fielding,' Gabrielle said with marked distinctness, 'about something very particular.'

'May I have the honour of calling on you—at any hour that suits you?'

'I am going to walk home,' she said. 'I am very fond of walking; will you walk a little way with me?'

'With the greatest pleasure,' Fielding said with as much gravity and as entire an absence of any indication of surprise as if such an invitation were one of the everyday occurrences of everybody's life. Gabrielle spoke with the express purpose of showing Charlton how friendly she could be with the man he had been

slandering. She would have done as much for Charlton an hour before if anyone had spoken unfairly of him. Janet opened the eyes of wonder as she saw Mrs. Vanthorpe and Fielding go down the stairs together. Charlton sat down with a dogged air, took up some work, and went viciously at it. He did not speak a word until his wife said,

‘Is Mrs. Vanthorpe offended with you, Robert? Did you say anything?’

‘I said what I believe to be the truth,’ he answered sharply. ‘I warned her against that fellow. I told her he was no fit acquaintance for her; and he isn’t. I told her he was a scamp of some kind; and I know he is.’

‘Oh, Robert, how could you? I’m sure she wouldn’t like that.’

‘What woman ever liked the truth?’ he asked scornfully, and he applied himself to his work. Janet said no more, but looked listlessly out of the window. She wondered whether they could possibly go to Mrs. Vanthorpe’s any more now.

Gabrielle and Fielding had got into the drear and silent little square out of which Bolingbroke Place opened.

‘I shall not trouble you to walk far with me, Mr. Fielding,’ Gabrielle said. ‘Suppose we go round this square?’

‘Anywhere you wish.’

He felt it a strange experience to be thus walking alone with her. It was very delightful in its way, but odd, and, under present circumstances, not a little embarrassing. She did not seem in the least embarrassed.

They walked on the little flagged footpath that goes round the railings of the square, and they were under the branches of trees which even in that sombre enclosure the spring was beginning to quicken into life and to inspire with the memories of the greenwood itself and with dreams of the youth of the world.

‘Well, Mr. Fielding?’

‘I beg pardon.’

‘You know what I want to ask you about. When I saw you at my house you told me nothing. Perhaps it was my fault; I ought to have asked you more distinctly.’

‘Oh—about poor Vanthorpe?’

‘Poor Vanthorpe? There is something bad, then—something melancholy? I might have guessed it. You seemed so unwilling to speak.’

‘The messenger comes in for the blame of the evil tidings,’ he said. ‘The news is bad, Mrs. Vanthorpe.’

‘*He is dead?*’

‘He is dead.’

Then there was a moment’s silence. They walked slowly under the trees. One of Gabrielle’s great hopes was gone.

‘Is that the worst?’ she asked after this pause. ‘Is there anything worse to be told than his death? What was his life?’

‘His life was not bad—not what men call bad. He was a man of honour.’

‘Thank God for that,’ she said.

‘He was a friend to his friend.’

‘Thank God again. These are virtues—what can one want more?’

‘I am glad to hear you say so; most women do not think so, Mrs. Vanthorpe——’

‘Do not think what? Do not think that honour, and sincerity, and faithfulness to one’s friend are virtues? Mr. Fielding, what women can you have known!’

‘I meant, that women look for respectability, and church-going, and belief, and all sorts of things,’ he said. ‘I thought mere truth, and honour, and faithfulness to one’s friends, were good qualities that only men value; or that men value more than women, at all events.’

‘Don’t think so any more. Well, tell me all the rest.’

‘I will tell you,’ he said slowly, ‘if you will promise me one thing.’

‘I don’t like promises; but tell me what it is.’

‘That you will not try to take any step whatever in this matter until you hear again from me.’

‘In what matter?’

‘In—well, in anything that relates to poor Phil Vanthorpe. I must ask you that; I have good reasons for it; you must trust me so far.’

‘Of course I will trust you, and I will promise if you wish.’ She looked up at him, and their eyes met. Full confidence was exchanged. The look was enough; each understood the other so far.

Then Fielding told her all he knew of Vanthorpe, only keeping back for the present the whereabouts of the wife and child. Gabrielle’s heart swelled with joy when she heard of the wife and child. Tears were in her eyes; as she looked at the pavement, it seemed to flicker before her.

‘Oh, I will go to her,’ she exclaimed.

A thrill of dismay passed through Fielding at the words. He was glad that he had bound her safely by a promise.

‘Remember, you are not to move until I tell you,’ he said.

‘But the child, Mr. Fielding?’

‘We’ll take care of that. All will come right; but you must wait—remember your promise.’

‘I do remember it—I do; but this is so tantalizing. I am so glad, and so sorry, and so perplexed. What strange chance threw me in your way?’

‘Strange indeed!’ he said.

‘If I had not chanced to meet you over there’—she glanced towards Bolingbroke Place—‘I never might have known of his wife and child.’

‘You never might have known.’ He was thinking of something else; he was thinking, not altogether joyously, of other things that might not have happened if they two had not met at Bolingbroke Place.

He gave her to understand as gently as he could that Philip Vanthorpe’s wife was not exactly a woman whom she could delight to know. His words made no impression; Gabrielle was evidently only longing for the chance to clasp her to her bosom.

‘I suppose he married a poor girl,’ she said. ‘I am glad of it; I like him the better—I shall like her the better.’

‘No, it isn’t exactly that. She is not what would be called a lady.’

‘I don’t care about that, Mr. Fielding. Education and manners are not everything. I thank heaven I have never learned to think them so.’

He thought it as well to say no more for the present. It seemed like sacrilege to intrude upon such unworldly faith with any worldly cautions. They spoke a little more of the one subject, and then she said, stopping in the square:

‘Now, Mr. Fielding, I shall dismiss you. You have done me a great favour. You have made me very sad, and very hopeful and happy, I think; and besides I look for favours to come from you in this matter. Now I want to say one word about yourself. I know who you are, and all about you. Why don’t you go and see your brother, and be friends with him?’

He was a little staggered by her unexpected knowledge, but he did not question its genuineness, nor ask her where she had got it; he only said,

‘Well, Mrs. Vanthorpe, my brother and I have not met for years, you know; and I suppose he hardly remembers me, and I am sure he does not care about me.’

‘Oh, but you don’t know. It is so wrong to judge of people in that way. And one’s brother! if I had a brother, do you think

I would allow any wretched misunderstanding to come between me and him?’

‘What would you do?’ he asked, looking with interest into her eyes. They were now walking slowly on again.

‘What would I do? Why, I would go to him and call him brother, and bare my heart to him. Are there only you two left of your family, and you go on in that way, as if the world would last for ever, and there were hundreds of years for the clearing up of absurd misunderstandings! Mr. Fielding, it is a shame.’

He was not anxious to break off the conversation. Her interest in it delighted him.

‘You see, Mrs. Vanthorpe, he is the rich man; he has the lands and beeves, and all the rest of it. I am the outlaw; he is the good boy, I am the idle apprentice. If I were to go now and hang around Dives’ gates——’

‘Yes, yes, I understand,’ she said impatiently; ‘that is what you call pride—man’s pride, I suppose; the pride that would rather do a great wrong than be suspected of a small meanness. What does it matter who suspects you? No one will for whose bad or good opinion you ought to care.’

‘But why I, Mrs. Vanthorpe—why not he?’

‘Does he know that you are here? Have you written to let him know? Was he likely to be found calling on someone at Bolingbroke Place as I happened to be?’

‘Not with the same motive, certainly.’

‘How? I don’t understand.’

‘Not for the sake of doing good to some poor devils, as you were.’

‘Oh, you don’t know. He probably does all the good he can in his own way. Well, Mr. Fielding, I give you fair warning. I am what you call a friend to my friend; I am that or nothing, and if I can do anything to bring you and your brother together I’ll do it. That I am determined on, whether you like it or not. And so good-bye for the present, and thank you again.’

He did not offer to go any farther with her. He looked after her for a moment as she went her way; and when she passed out of the square it seemed to become grey and arid and commonplace. He walked listlessly along, and as he walked he kept thinking to himself that it is such women who make men feel sorry they had not led better lives; and all the common errors of youth, and folly, and adventure, and animal spirits seemed things to put away from memory as much as possible when thinking of her. ‘I think if it were all to do over again I shouldn’t mind being called Clarkson,’ he said to himself.

CHAPTER XV.

A MAN AND A BROTHER.

GABRIELLE'S active spirit was again at work. It had now a thoroughly congenial task. If she could reconcile these two brothers, what achievement could be more worthy of a woman who had devoted herself to the good of her fellows?

She thought she could do it. She felt sure she could. It was essentially a woman's work. Woman the peacemaker was one of Gabrielle's cherished ideas. History, perhaps, and the common experience of life do not invariably exhibit woman in that capacity; but Gabrielle not merely loved, as we all do, to think of woman thus employed—she firmly believed, as some people perhaps do not, that such was woman's most congenial employment. She felt that a movement towards reconciliation would come with best effect from the elder brother who had the title, and the lands, and beeves, and all the rest of it, as Fielding said; and the thing was now how to get at Sir Wilberforce Fielding. Doubtless this could be done through Major Leven. He ought to have means of knowing everyone who was called after a philanthropist. But then Gabrielle shrank from making Major Leven a confederate in her plot, and she did not like the idea of inviting the unfriendly comments of his wife in case of failure, which even Gabrielle admitted to herself was not absolutely impossible. So she bethought her of good Lady Honeybell, and she found to her great joy that Lady Honeybell was well acquainted with Sir Wilberforce, and that she would ask him to come and see her on one of her Thursday afternoons, when Gabrielle could happen to be there also, and an acquaintance might be brought about. Gabrielle told Lady Honeybell frankly what she wanted to do, and gave her a slight sketch of the family history and the strange adventures and yet stranger character of the younger Fielding.

Lady Honeybell was interested and amused.

'Eh, my dear, it seems to me that you are a great deal too young and too pretty to be meddling and making between these gentlemen. I think you had better leave it to me, and see what I can do.'

'But, Lady Honeybell, what does it matter whether one is young or not, if one can do any good? One can't be too young to try to do good. I might not have any right perhaps to ask a stranger, even you who are so kind, to say anything about Mr. Fielding. He did not object when I told him I would speak to his brother if I saw him ever; but then——'

‘But then he might not like anyone else to do it?’ the kindly Lady Honeybell conjectured. ‘Well, it is likely enough he would rather have you for his second than me, though I think I could manage things better for all that. Nay, nay, don’t look disappointed; I’m not going to interfere with your mission, if you think you have a call that way. It’s a good purpose, and I don’t see how any harm can come of it anyhow—to you, or to Sir Wilberforce either, for the matter of that. You’ll not find him a very romantic person, I may as well tell you beforehand.’

So it was settled that Gabrielle was to try her hand on Sir Wilberforce at the first opportunity, and the opportunity was easily made. One of Lady Honeybell’s Thursdays was appointed; the hour came, and the man.

Gabrielle was a little disappointed at first by the appearance of Sir Wilberforce. He was tall and large, florid of face, reddish of hair, with light blue eyes, and a general expression of shallow cheeriness. He was not like his brother, except perhaps in height and strength of build; seen in the back, he was a little like a Clarkson Fielding grown stout, and perhaps he had a family resemblance in rather well-formed features; if Gabrielle could have seen Wilberforce’s mother and compared her with Clarkson’s mother she might have understood how and where the two brothers came to be unlike each other. After being disappointed Gabrielle became suddenly encouraged, for Sir Wilberforce was so much older than she that she felt she might say anything to him. He must have been forty at the very least, and there was even, it seemed to her, something fatherly about him; altogether she felt quite equal to her task now. Sir Wilberforce was formally presented to her, and Lady Honeybell was making efforts to withdraw her other guests gradually from the immediate neighbourhood, and leave Gabrielle to a *tête-à-tête* with Sir Wilberforce. This was not at first quite easy.

‘Have you heard, Lady Honeybell, of what I have been doing with my house? No? I have been trying an entirely new plan of lighting and heating; the whole place is turned upside down. I am convinced that our present system of lighting and heating our houses is opposed to the first principles of economy and of health, and I think I have hit upon the right way at last.’

‘Furnaces—steam-pipes?’ Lady Honeybell suggested. ‘Anything like the American plans?’

‘No, oh dear no, nothing of the kind. Furnaces, and steam, and all that, are quite absurd. You see, you only increase the very evils you want to avoid. American houses are stifling—stifling; regular hothouses, indeed,’ and Sir Wilberforce laughed quietly at

his own joke. 'The principle is to get the maximum of light and of dryness with the minimum of heat. Of course you can't have light without heat, some heat; but my theory is the minimum of heat always. I hold that heat of itself generates heat. I begin at the very beginning, you know. I must explain my process, Lady Honeybell, if it succeeds—and I am sure it will.'

'But I am so old-fashioned in my ways, Sir Wilberforce, and I never could bear having any house of mine turned upside down.'

'No, really, is that so? Now, I delight in it. I am always trying something new. After all, you know, practical science is the great thing. It's the spirit of the age. Science belongs to all time, but practical science, you know, belongs to our time. I am always occupied in practical science.'

'Now, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' Lady Honeybell suggested, 'is a young woman, and she is in love with every new discovery, I am sure, and I don't suppose she has a great many calls upon her time just now, and I dare say a little absorption in something would do her all the world of good. Why don't you go in for trying some of these new processes in your house, Mrs. Vanthorpe? I'm sure Sir Wilberforce is the kindest—oh, he would be delighted to explain them all to you any time.'

'Delighted, delighted,' Sir Wilberforce said, looking more closely at Gabrielle, whose name he had not quite caught at first, and whom he supposed to be a Miss something or other. Sir Wilberforce was not much drawn towards Misses; he did not find that as a rule they cared for the application of science to the business of practical life.

'I like to hear of anything that is new,' said Gabrielle, doing for the moment a little bit of hypocrisy. The hero of older days had to stoop down in order to be made a knight. Perhaps this was allegorical, as a sort of excuse for the destiny which compels even the most chivalric impulse to stoop now and then in order to get leave to accomplish its lofty mission.

'Should you really?' Sir Wilberforce asked. 'I am delighted to hear it. I like of all things to find a lady taking an interest in the practical application of science. I have turned myself altogether to such pursuits. I don't trouble much now about politics—don't see the use of it. Poor father was a great philanthropist; I don't trouble about philanthropy in his sort of way, you know. I think a man may do more good now by helping to develop practical science. The time is gone by for emancipation, and abolition, and all that sort of thing, Mrs. Vanthorpe—don't you think so? And missions to teach religion to the heathen, and gospel in foreign parts, and all that—well, I subscribe to them all, you know, because

poor father did ; but I give you my word, Mrs. Vanthorpe, I sometimes wish the heathen would come over here, and do a little missionary work among us. Yes, yes ? don't you think so ?'

'Now is my time,' thought Gabrielle.

'You do good in one way, Sir Wilberforce—your father did good in another; everyone must have his path in life. I know a member of your family—' and colouring slightly she made a plunge at her subject. She was at once stimulated and alarmed by the kindly encouragement of Lady Honeybell, who, being somewhat short of sight, was sending eager inquiring looks towards her, and was assisting them by slight pantomimic gestures at once urging her on and questioning as to the progress she was making.

'I beg your pardon ?' Sir Wilberforce said. 'You were speaking of some member of my family, Mrs. Vanthorpe?'

'I know a member of your family—your brother.'

'My brother ? Yes, yes ! I have a brother, but I have not seen him these many years, poor fellow ; shouldn't know him from Adam if he were to walk into this room, I dare say. But you were saying you knew him. You must have been very young when you knew him, Mrs. Vanthorpe, for he has been ever so long away. I wonder where he is now ?'

'He is in London,' Gabrielle said quietly. 'I saw him only a few days ago.'

'God bless my soul ! you don't mean that ? Quite sure you are not mistaken, Mrs. Vanthorpe ? He's been away so long, you know, and we never heard anything about him. I almost fancied he was dead really.'

'He is not dead ; he has come back to London, Sir Wilberforce, and I am sure he is very anxious to see you.'

'Do you tell me so ? Really, now ? Poor Clarkson ! why, we haven't met for years. I shall be so delighted. If you should happen to see him again, Mrs. Vanthorpe, would you ask him to give me a call ? I wonder where he has been all this time ?'

'I think he would take it more kindly if you were to call on him, Sir Wilberforce. He is a little proud, perhaps ; and I believe he is under the impression that there was a sort of quarrel or estrangement of some kind.'

'Do you think so. Does he think so ? Quarrel—estrangement—oh, dear no, except that of course there must be some estrangement when a young fellow takes himself off to the other end of the world and does not come back for years and years. Poor father, he was as good a man as ever lived, Mrs. Vanthorpe, but I always thought he was wrong about Clarkson, you know. I always told him so, and I can assure you he didn't like to be told it one bit.

Clarkson was a good fellow, you know, and a very clever fellow, but a little wrongheaded—a little wrongheaded. Poor father and he didn't bit it off somehow. Clarkson's mother was odd, a little odd; very clever, quite clever, but a little odd. We made up an odd household at that time. I fancy Clarkson was tired of the whole thing; after his mother died, you know. And he has really come back, you tell me? Not very well off, I suppose? or did he make money in—wherever he was? They often do, you know.'

On this point Gabrielle could offer no opinion.

'No, of course not; he wouldn't talk to you about such things as that. Why, I have any amount of money standing to his account—his allowance that he wouldn't take, and poor father wished it to be always kept for him. He wasn't unkind, poor father, only a little odd, you know.'

'I suppose he was very sorry when his son went away,' Gabrielle said; 'did he blame himself?'

'Blame himself, Mrs. Vanthorpe? Oh, no, not he—that wasn't his way. He always thought he was right in everything—never supposed he could be in fault. He wouldn't have done a wrong thing for the world if he had only known he was doing wrong, but that was the thing you never could convince him of; he never would see it; he was always sure he was right. And so Clarkson has turned up again? I wonder if he has picked up some new things—new ideas—abroad. I don't think he used to care much about practical science, but travel and experience change a man. I hope he isn't married, Mrs. Vanthorpe? I wonder if he remembered to tell you anything about that.'

'No, I am sure he is not married,' Gabrielle said, with as little approach to a smile as Sir Wilberforce had himself when he gravely put the question.

'I'm very glad to hear it. A man should not marry so young as that. I don't think Clarkson can be thirty yet—no, I am sure he isn't quite thirty. I have a theory, Mrs. Vanthorpe, that a man ought not to marry until he is forty. Don't you agree with me? or have you thought the matter over at all? Have you given any attention to it?'

Gabrielle not giving an answer at once to this question Sir Wilberforce became possessed with the conviction either that she was married to a very young man or that she was a widow, in either of which cases the discussion he had started would be unsatisfactory. He therefore turned the conversation at once upon his brother again.

'So much obliged to you, Mrs. Vanthorpe, for telling me about

poor Clarkson. I'll call on him at once. By the way, do you know where he is living?'

Gabrielle described the locality of Bolingbroke Place to the surprised baronet.

'What an odd sort of place! I wonder how he found his way over there? Dare say he must be hard up, poor Clarkson! Do you know the number, Mrs. Vanthorpe? Pray don't mind, though—don't trouble yourself. I never should remember it. I'll call at your house, if you will allow me that honour, and if you will be kind enough to have his address found for me I'll write it down then and there, and I'll go to see him at once.'

The delighted Gabrielle made an appointment on the instant to receive a call from Sir Wilberforce the next day but one. She could hardly believe in her success. Everything seemed to be shaping itself specially to the ends of her little plot. For the moment Sir Wilberforce talked of visiting her she formed a new and a charming plot.

'A very delightful young woman your friend Mrs. Vanthorpe,' Sir Wilberforce whispered to Lady Honeybell as he was taking his leave. 'Sensible woman, too; has some interest in practical science.'

'She's a dear good creature,' Lady Honeybell answered, evading the question as to practical science.

'Husband dead?'

Lady Honeybell nodded, and Sir Wilberforce took his leave, not without casting a glance back at the corner of the room where Gabrielle was now sitting.

Presently Gabrielle too was departing.

'How goes the benevolent plot, my dear?' Lady Honeybell asked in a low tone.

'Oh, Lady Honeybell,' Gabrielle replied, her eyes all lighting up with joy. 'I do think I have done something good to-day—I do indeed.'

'Indeed, I shouldn't wonder,' said Lady Honeybell.

If there was a restless sleepless pillow in London that night it was that which Gabrielle Vanthorpe pressed. She was absorbed in her schemes and hopes, and would have cordially besought the gods to annihilate time and space to bring two brothers together. One of her hopes had sunk below her horizon. It had risen and gone down again with as sudden a burst as that of the sun seems to be when we watch him rising or setting on the sea. She was never to see the lost brother of her husband, now at length known to be lost indeed. She would never have the chance of restoring that son to his mother. But it was yet open to her perhaps to do

some good even in that direction. There was a wife, and there was a child, and she would not be prevented by any considerations of prudence or propriety from striving to hold out a helping hand to the woman who had so near a claim on her. In the mean time she had the opportunity, rarely given to anyone in common life, of bringing two brothers together who had long been estranged, and that was enough to fill her thoughts and make a night restless. She had been disappointed in Sir Wilberforce Fielding, as Lady Honeybell predicted, but not by any means as Lady Honeybell expected. She was agreeably disappointed. He was odd, Gabrielle thought, and a little absurd, and something perhaps of a bore, but she was convinced that he had a good and kindly heart, and that he only needed to see his brother in order to be drawn towards him—as she herself had been, Gabrielle thought simply. She liked the younger brother, and she was sure she would like the elder too.

The day and the hour had come. Gabrielle had arranged all her plans admirably. Sir Wilberforce was coming to see her at five o'clock, and she had written a short note to Clarkson asking him to call on her as soon after five as possible without telling him why or wherefore. She had given instructions that Mr. Fielding was to be shown in when he came, but that his name was not to be announced. She counted a good deal on the dramatic effect of surprise. Sir Wilberforce, she feared, might, if formally prepared for what he had to expect, take things too coolly; his brother, on the other hand, if allowed to expect anything, would expect too much, and would go away disappointed.

Sir Wilberforce came punctually to the moment. He had been puzzling himself as to how Gabrielle had come to know Clarkson, or even to know of his being in London. He had not thought anything about this when first she spoke to him, but now it puzzled him a good deal. In his experience of life he had not known of women who went out of their way to take any trouble about young men of their own class unless where some very close friendship existed or the possibility of a yet closer tie. Englishwomen didn't do such things, he thought; they don't like the idea of having remarks made. Yet here was an Englishwoman who evidently did not care about the remarks that might be made. This in itself was disturbing to one's established notions of things. Sir Wilberforce was not a very clever person, nor was his a particularly lofty order of being; but he was without affectation, and was prepared so far to understand a woman like Gabrielle Vanthorpe.

'Good day, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' he said, as he entered Gabrielle's



'Why, this is never Clarkson!'

room, smiling, fresh, and florid, looking not at all unlike a more reasonable Frenchman's notion of a typical English Milor. 'So good of you to allow me to visit you. I hope you haven't taken the trouble to write down this boy's address for me? No, no; it would be too bad to give you that trouble. I was going to ask you, too, if you don't mind telling me, how you came to know of poor Clarkson's existence, and where he is, and all that.'

Gabrielle felt that the moment had come. While Sir Wilberforce was speaking, she saw the younger Fielding enter the room. Fielding knew his brother at once. Sir Wilberforce hardly noticed the new-comer, but stood quietly waiting for Gabrielle to answer.

'Come,' said Gabrielle, not without a certain trepidation and a tendency to break down, 'I have brought you two brothers together and—and—' she did not exactly know what to say next.

'Why, this is never Clarkson?' Sir Wilberforce said, holding out his hand. 'Yes, but it is, though. How do you do, Clarkson?'

'Well, Wilberforce,' said Clarkson; and he did not say any more. They shook hands.

'Should never have known you again,' Wilberforce observed. 'I say, what a tall good-looking fellow you have grown. I was just going to see you; came to get your address from Mrs. Vanthorpe; ask her if I didn't.'

'You'll find me in a queer old shop,' Fielding said; 'ask Mrs. Vanthorpe if it isn't.'

'Never mind about that,' Wilberforce interrupted; 'I've a lot of money for you, you know; all your own.'

'I'm all right; I don't want money.'

'Poor father's dead, you know.'

'I know,' said Fielding.

Thus the two brothers met for the first time after a lapse of long years and after changes that cannot be measured by years. It might have seemed the coldest and most unsatisfactory meeting possible under such circumstances. But to Gabrielle, whose imaginative temperament did not always lead her astray, it did not thus appear. She was sure that the younger Fielding was satisfied with the manner in which his brother had received him, and that cordiality would soon set in. She was satisfied with them and with herself. As she stood a little apart from the brothers she felt tears of delight rising in her eyes.

'You'll come and stay with me,' Wilberforce said, 'and we'll talk over things?'

‘ Well, I don’t know about staying with you ; we’ll talk about that.’

‘ Oh, yes, of course you will stay with your brother,’ Gabrielle said, breaking into the conversation. ‘ You must do whatever your elder brother wishes you to do.’

‘ Of course he must, mustn’t he, Mrs. Vanthorpe ?’ Sir Wilberforce asked, turning to her, and delighted that she had entered into the talk. Both the brothers, it must be owned, grew more cordial in their manner when relieved from the exactions of the *tête-à-tête*. Gabrielle saw this well enough. The rest will come in time, she thought. The brothers went away together. Sir Wilberforce had been wondering whether Clarkson would stay after him, and would act like one whose character as an intimate friend gave him a right to do so. But he saw that Clarkson seemed to claim no such right, and when the elder rose to go the younger rose too.

Sir Wilberforce was rapid and profuse in his expressions of thankfulness to Gabrielle. His brother said nothing. When they were going, Fielding the younger was a moment behind Sir Wilberforce, and Gabrielle caught at the chance.

‘ Have I done well ?’ she asked.

‘ As you always do,’ he answered. ‘ You couldn’t do anything that was not well.’

‘ You are satisfied with your brother ?’

‘ I am sure he is a good fellow ; I know he is ; I like his expression ; I trust to it.’

‘ Oh, so do I,’ said Gabrielle fervently.

Fielding followed his brother. As they were going down the stairs Gabrielle could hear Wilberforce saying in his odd quick way,

‘ You must have lots of things to tell me. I say, you ought to have picked up all sorts of new ideas abroad about practical science, and all that. I’m so glad to hear that you are not married. Too soon for you to think of that—much too soon. I am hardly thinking of getting married yet ; daresay I must some day.’

Gabrielle’s plot had succeeded beyond her best expectations—so far.

(To be continued.)

Half-an-hour at Didcot Junction.

NOBODY can for a moment assert that Didcot Junction is an amusing place to spend an idle afternoon. I will even venture to say that of all the dreary, draughty, and desolate railway-stations in Great Britain and Ireland, Didcot Junction is the dreariest, draughtiest, and most unapproachably desolate that I have ever paced up and down, catching a fine cold and anathematizing my stars withal. For here am I, on a misty afternoon in this English spring, having failed to overtake the 2.45 down train, compelled to wait just thirty mortal minutes for the 3.15. Two of my fellow-sufferers—Oxford undergraduates, I should say by their coats—are solacing themselves with a glass of sherry, enlivened by the intellectual conversation of a young lady in profuse golden hair, who acts as Hebe at the neighbouring refreshment bar. But for my part I cannot derive acute pleasure from the social intercourse of our modern Hebes, and so I have nothing to do but tramp along the platform from end to end, bite my lips, twirl my stick, and scowl with fierce British indignation at the unoffending porters who represent for the moment my deadly enemies, the Great Western Railway Company.

Yet I am not wholly deprived of literary and pictorial recreation, even on the dreary walls of Didcot Junction. That great modern civilizer, the advertising agent, has cared for my æsthetic delectation amid the rural wilds of Berkshire, as well as on the artistic hoardings of the gay metropolis. Here I can still feast my eyes upon the lion entangled in a net and released by a philanthropic mouse, which metaphorically announces to the travelling public the marvellous cures performed by Dr. Herbalist's Universal Panacea—I am not certain that I quote the name correctly, but at any rate I have caught the spirit of the composition. Here I can still gaze with delight upon that phenomenally verdant bush, adorned with symmetrical bunches of white blossoms, upon which grows Messrs. Puffman's famous Young Hyson Tea, the finest that enterprising firm has tasted since the remarkable season of 1862. Here, too, I can behold the gigantic swedes which result from the judicious use of the patent phospho-guano, and can admire, in representation at least, the appetising effects of half a dozen sauces, soups, and oriental relishes. Art, once confined to the palaces of princes, has now made itself the humble servant of commerce, and

deigns to adorn with its brightest if not its choicest hues the otherwise blank and staring expanse of Didcot Junction.

The advertisement at which I am at this moment gazing, however, is one of less gorgeous hue than those which proclaim the virtues of universal panaceas or potted soups. It is simply the announcement of some land for sale in the immediate neighbourhood on Friday next, and it ends with the words, 'Apply to Edward Chapman Allington, Wadley, Berks.' I have always had a fancy for tracing out names of persons or places, and this chance collocation of names for some unknown reason rouses my interest. Instead of eating out my heart by tramping any longer up and down this melancholy station, let me seat myself on the remarkably hard bench provided for my use by the Company, and think what I could tell the readers of *Belgravia* in a future number about these four or five words.

Every name is a fossil, full of curious little points which lead us back to half-forgotten habits of our ancestors. I love to take these fossils, now and then, twist and turn them a bit, discover all their secrets, and find out when and where they first began to be. Here is this name 'Edward Chapman Allington,' for example: what a mine of conjecture it lays open before me! Of course I can give no very probable guess as to how it became the property of the particular person who bears it; but I may not be far out if I conjecture that, while his father was certainly an Allington, his mother was perhaps a Chapman. As to the Edward, I can make nothing much of that for the present; but no doubt before I finish I shall have something to say upon that subject too.

Let me begin, then, with the surname of Allington. Edward Chapman himself got that name in all probability from his father (unless, indeed, he has assumed it by advertisement, for what will not the all-powerful advertisement effect nowadays?), and the father in turn obtained it from *his* father, and so on *ad infinitum*. But no, not quite *ad infinitum*; for if we were to trace back the surname of Allington to its source, we should find that it did not extend much further down in antiquity than the thirteenth century. That was the great era of surname-making, when the various Ralphs, Williams, Guys, and Hughes of mediæval English villages began to distinguish one another by those additional designations which have at last become hereditary, and now belong to us all much more than our real names. For, in the theory of the Church, our true description is that, and that alone, which we got, as the Catechism tells us, from 'our godfathers and godmothers at our baptism.' In marriage, in christening, and in all other solemn religious rites, only the christian name is used, because the

surname has always been regarded ecclesiastically as a mere tag or nickname, unfit to be intruded on those sacred occasions. And such it really was at first—a simple descriptive epithet, marking out one Richard or Walter from another by means of his father, or his house, or his trade, or his personal appearance, or some other special peculiarity. And while the law, in spite of its conservatism, has at length admitted surnames to an equal position with the baptismal designations, the Church, still more retentive of ancient usage, has always persistently disregarded them as unworthy of her exalted sanction.

Some time about the thirteenth century, then, some particular Giles, or Gilbert, or Piers must first have become known to his neighbours as Piers of Allington, and given a patronymic to a long line of descendants, culminating in my present subject, the Edward Chapman aforesaid. Now, this special name of Allington belongs to the local class; that is to say, it is derived from the place where its first bearer resided. Our hypothetical Piers might have been the son of a William or a Robert, and so might conceivably have originated a family of Williamsons or Robertsons, if even he did not perpetuate his own existence in a household of Piersons or Pearsons. Again, he might have been better known for some peculiarity of complexion or stature, in which case he would have been the ancestor of half-a-dozen Blacks or Browns, Longs or Thynnes. Once more, he might possibly have acquired a cognomen from his occupation, handing down the memory of his own trade to a whole pedigree of Bakers, Smiths, or Carpenters. But the inexorable logic of facts clearly shows that he—the unknown progenitor of the Allingtons—did actually and indubitably derive his surname from the place in which he lived. And that being so, I see no reason why we should further speculate over that vast and practically boundless field for the exercise of human ingenuity, the *might have been*.

Even after chance had decided, however, that this suppositious Giles or Piers of ours should bear a local surname rather than one of any other class, it was by no means certain that that surname would be taken from his native village. Some Jack of the Mill handed down the tradition of his windmill on some high chalk down to the great radical philosopher of our own age; and many a Hill or Green or Field on our signboards still recalls the rural dwelling-place of a forgotten ancestor. But Giles of Allington bore the name of his home like so many Leicesters, Sheffields, and Yorks in our midst to-day. Doubtless Giles himself, and his son and his grandson, were called in full 'of Allington'; but after four or five generations the preposition was dropped, and by the

reign of Richard II., the family would appear as simple Allingtons. In like manner, the earliest forerunner of the great logician probably called himself 'Simon atte Mill'; but before a hundred years the prefix had fallen off, and the Mills had ceased to remember the origin of their race.

The next question that arises refers to the whereabouts of Allington. In what part of England was the village situated from which Edward Chapman derives his patronymic? This question, unfortunately, I cannot settle without special documentary evidence; for there are places so called in no fewer than six counties, according to Mr. Isaac Taylor—namely, Kent, Hants, Dorset, Devon, Wilts, and Lincoln. Amongst such a variety, I could not easily decide, unless I could trace the particular Allington family to which Edward Chapman belongs, through parish registers, wills, and other trustworthy memorials, for some two or three hundred years. In the present century, people run about so much from county to county that the work of recognition is well-nigh impossible. As an antiquary, I cannot help wishing that railways could be promptly abolished by Act of Parliament, and every man compelled to live out his whole life in his native county:—then genealogists might have some chance of tracking a man's pedigree to its real sources. But this Berkshire Allington of to-day, for aught I know to the contrary, may be a mere fresh immigrant from Northumberland or the Land's End. Nevertheless, as he clearly belongs to the farmer class, which has been far less affected as yet than any other by the itch of change, I will venture to guess that his forefathers lived in the nearest village of Allington to his present home; and that would be in the county of Wilts. It seems scarcely probable that he or his predecessors have come from so far as Kent, Dorsetshire, or Lincoln, to settle down as cultivators in a quiet little corner of Berks.

Was the original Giles of Allington—I stick to my imaginary christian name, for clearness' sake—the lord of the manor, or a mere common boor? In other words, was the surname at first territorial, or merely local? Here, again, only documentary evidence will help me out. I must trace back the family by written records, and then consult the proper registers, perhaps Domesday Book itself, before I can settle this knotty point. Both classes of name alike exist; and both bear exactly similar forms. We all know how jealously the Scotch lairds guard their territorial additions—Cameron of Lochiel or Farquharson of Invercauld—but there is no possibility of distinguishing south of the Tweed between the descendants of a Norman baron and of his lowest serf, if both *happen to bear the local surname*. There is more than one genuine

Tichborne in England whose manners are quite as primitive as those of the 'unfortunate nobleman' at present languishing in the cells of Portland.

And now that we have tracked Allington as a surname to its probable source, we have still to inquire, whence came Allington as a local name? How did these various villages in so many different counties acquire their common title? Evidently, Allington must have a meaning of its own, and this meaning must have been applicable to the six different places upon which it was bestowed by our early English forefathers. In this case, we have exactly to reverse our previous process. We have just seen how a personal name may be derived from that of a place: we have now to see how the name of a place may be derived from that of a person.

Rorke's Drift is just now a still familiar sound in English ears. Who Rorke may have been, I cannot tell you, but I venture to conjecture that he was an enterprising Dutch boer, who built himself a wooden house by the side of a 'drift' or ford over the Tugela river, and gave his own name to the spot where he settled. Now, this is just the process by which a large number of English towns first obtained their designations. A family of English colonists, fresh from the old Teutonic home by the mouth of Elbe, drove out or enslaved the 'Ancient Britons' or Welsh aborigines, as the Dutch drove out or enslaved the Zulus, and settled down in a farm on the conquered land, which they called after their own tribe or *elan*. Often the very word 'ford' enters into the composition of the name: for in England and South Africa alike fords are places of great importance, both military and commercial, before the building of bridges has superseded the necessity for their use. Thus, in early English times, a family of Wealings took up their abode by the lowest fordable passage of the Thames, and called it Wealingaford or Wallingford after their own name. This is exactly the case of Rorke's Drift in an earlier and more truly English form.

In like manner, during the Teutonic colonisation of eastern England, a clan of *Ælings* sailed over from the primitive English land in Schleswig-Holstein and Friesland, and made new homes for themselves in many parts of Britain. I am afraid they were a most unmitigated set of heathen freebooters, these early English pioneers, landing in some broad reach of the larger rivers from their piratical boats, not unlike Bornean Dyaks or other modern savages, and putting to death all the Welshmen they could catch, with no more regard to international rights than their descendants now show in New Zealand or Afghanistan. The only difference is

that then the English were heathen and killed the Christians, whereas now they are Christians and kill the heathen instead. As for the women and children, they kept them as serfs; though Mr. E. A. Freeman, who will keep up the purity of our Teutonic blood at any price, will not hear of a single Welshwoman being left alive even as a hewer of wood and drawer of water. For my part, I am not so bloodthirsty, and I must allow that many of them probably survived to infuse a fraction of Welsh heredity into our English veins.

These Teutonic Ælings, who settled in the six villages I have mentioned, were a clan or tribe. For though in later days each Englishman bore only a single name of his own, yet at the date of the colonisation the whole people was divided into clans bearing a common title, not unlike the Macphersons and Campbells of Scotland, or the Cornelii and Fabii of ancient Rome. But while among the Celts and Italians the clan continued as a recognised unit to a very late stage of development, among the English, as among the Greeks, it early fell into comparative abeyance. Thus it happens that in the very earliest age we find clan names as well as personal designations; at a somewhat later period we find single names only; and yet later again we find the surname arising—a mark of the family which replaced the older clan.

The clan name was regularly formed, among the early English, by adding the patronymic syllable *ing* to the name of a real or mythical ancestor. For example, the royal race of Kent, descended from Æsc, the ash-tree, were known as the Æscings, or, to put it in the form we should now employ, Ashings. Thus the son of Esa would be an Esing, and the son of Cynric a Cynric-ing. The English Chronicle, the earliest historical monument of our race, traces up the pedigree of every hero to the god Woden in some such fashion as this:—‘Cerdic was Elesing; Eles was Esling; Esla was Gewising; Gewis was Wiging; Wig was Freawining; Freawine was Branding; Brand was Bældæging; Bældæg was Wodening.’ This mode of reckoning up a genealogy is exactly similar to that which occurs in the New Testament, where we read similarly of ‘Aminidab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham.’ Nay, so close is the resemblance, that while the earlier English pedigrees, handed down no doubt from heathen times, only carry back the family tree as far as the great god Woden, the later ones, under Christian and monkish influences, treat Woden as a mere man occurring in the *midst of the series*, and trace down the descent of the Teutonic

Jupiter himself from the patriarch Noah. The delightful way in which the chronicler suddenly passes from English to Hebrew names is truly refreshing to minds wearied of modern philological wrangling: for after pointing out that Woden was the son of Frealaf, who was himself the twelfth in line from Hwala, the excellent monk continues: 'Hwala was Bedwiging; Bedwig was Sceafing; Sceaf was the son of Noah; he was born in Noah's Ark. Lamech, Matusalem, Enoc, Jared, Malalehel, Camon, Enos, Seth, Adam, the first man and our ancestor.' Lest any reader should imagine that this last is a mere stroke of inventive genius on my part, I can assure him that he will find it word for word, in very good Anglo-Saxon, under the year 855 A.D. in the Chronicle.

Wherever the clans settled, they left their name impressed upon the place. The *ham* or home of the Birlings was at Birlingham; of the Mannings at Manningham; of the Bermarings at Birmingham; of the Serings at Sherringham. The *tun* or farm of the Wealings was at Wellington; of the Wæsings at Washington; and of the Hearings at Harrington. So numerous are these settlements, that in a good county map one may always find some forty or fifty names having this characteristic middle syllable. One may compare them with such modern colonial names as Smith's Clearing or Glyn's Falls, which meet the traveller in Australia, Canada, or the Western States on every side.

So Allington meant originally the *tun* or town of the Ælings. For though we spell the clan name with a mysterious-looking diphthong, that is only in deference to Anglo-Saxon phonetic orthography, and the word itself is pronounced exactly as if spelt *Allings*. Then as to the suffix *tun*, it bore the primitive sense not of 'town' but of a farm-yard or enclosure. So that in the last resort, Edward Chapman Allington derives his surname from a village where one of his remote ancestors once lived; and the village itself derives its name from a still more remote body of early English settlers, belonging to the Æling clan, who colonised the spot by force of arms, and built a fortified farmhouse, some time about the middle of the sixth century after Christ in all probability. What a strange pedigree it seems for a man whom I only know by seeing his name in printed letters on the walls of a modern English railway station!

So far, however, I have only endeavoured to trace the third of Mr. Allington's triple designations to its final source. I have still a quarter of an hour to deal with Edward Chapman. Suppose for uniformity's sake I take the second in order next.

Chapman, as I roughly guess, was the maiden name of Mrs. Allington senior. A couple of centuries ago, Master Edward

would have been baptised by one name only as Edward Allington. But during the last hundred years the practice of giving children two or more christian names has rapidly increased; and Lord Macaulay tells us that a Tory wit was accustomed to ascribe the growth of radical feeling to this unnatural custom of bearing two separate prænomens. However this may be, there is no doubt that the habit has grown rapidly since the French Revolution, and descended from the aristocracy to the plebs, until now almost every little child in the street is a Henry Augustus or an Angelina Maud. Once the dual system has taken deep root, what more natural than to call a boy by his mother's maiden name as a second element in the compound pair? Not having the pleasure of Mr. E. C. Allington's personal acquaintance, I am far from wishing to dogmatise upon the subject: but I throw out the hint with due caution as representing on the whole, perhaps, as probable a solution of the problem as any other that could be offered.

How, then, did Mrs. Allington's ancestors become possessed of the name of Chapman? Clearly this is not a local name, like her presumed husband's; nor is it a pure patronymic, like Johnson or Wilson. It belongs to the same class as Baker and Carpenter, the class derived from an ancestral trade or profession. The word itself is connected with so many curious old usages of our language that it is well worth five minutes' consideration.

A chapman in early English was a merchant or salesman, a person, that is to say, who sold goods. Not indeed a merchant in the modern sense as understood in the City, but a pedlar or itinerant dealer who walked about the country districts with his pack on his back. From the Anglo-Saxon word *ceapian*, to buy, we get a whole host of interesting phrases. '*Cheap*, an abbreviation of *good cheap*,' says Mr. Isaac Taylor, 'answers to the French *bon marché*.' 'Cheapside and Eastcheap were the old market-places of London.' 'The original sense of the word is that of bargaining—the ancient method of making a purchase—which is preserved in the word to *chaffer*. To *chop* horses is to sell them. To *chop* and change is to sell and barter. To *swop* and to *swab* are probably phonetic variations of to chop.' So, too, a Cheap Jack is not, as most people fancy, a man who sells things cheap, but a Jack-merchant, that is to say a common sort of pedlar, the name Jack being used, as often elsewhere, in a contemptuous sense. Once more, the word Chipping prefixed to the towns of Chipping Norton, Chipping Camden, Chipping Sodbury, Chipping Barnet, and many others, denotes that they were anciently places of commercial importance, and may be compared with the more modern ones of Newmarket or Market Harborough. Indeed, to cheap or

buy is a root whose derivatives would take me so long to follow out in detail that if I endeavoured to do it now, I should most infallibly miss that 3.15 train. So I had better stick close to my text, and wander away no farther from the theme of Chapman.

One of Mrs. Allington's early ancestors we conclude to have been such an itinerant dealer, and to have handed down his name to his descendants. But note here that surnames do not take the feminine form. We have no Johndaughters by the side of our Johnsons, no Chapwomans by the side of our Chapmans. Occasionally a woman becomes the founder of a family designation, as in the case of Anson and Margetson, Baxter and Brewster: but when a form has once become firmly fixed as a hereditary surname, it does not vary with the sex in after generations.

And now we finally arrive at the first of our three names, Edward. Where Mr. E. C. Allington picked up this label for his individuality I cannot venture to say. In my total ignorance of his family connexions, I will not hazard a guess whether it descends to him from his father, his grandfather, his rich uncle, or his wealthy godfather. Perhaps it may even be what women call 'a fancy name,' chosen merely because it is considered pretty, as so many people nowadays choose high-sounding appellations like Cyril, Claude, Olga, and Geraldine. But whatever may be the antecedents of Edward in this particular case, we can at least point out how it came to be one of the possible names which the Allington family could bestow upon their son in this nineteenth century of ours.

For everyone must have noted that names have their special epochs, like everything else. A hundred years ago we were all Georges, Henrys, Augustuses, Sophias, Charlottes, and Carolines. Nowadays we have a much wider choice of Alberts, Alfreds, Ernests, Gerards, Ronalds, Granvilles, Marions, Carlottas, Gertrudes, Ediths, Fredericas, and Wilhelmines. Nomenclature, in fact, passes through as many varying fashions as dress. The names that occur in history or old documents before the Norman Conquest were all swept away by the intrusive flood of Guys, Walters, Hughs, Rogers, Gilberts, Geoffreys, and Ralphs which followed in the wake of the Conqueror's nobility. During the Middle Ages names remained on the whole tolerably fixed in England; but with the Renaissance a whole host of strange vocables occupied the land and forced themselves into a place by every fireside. In Queen Elizabeth's time it first became the custom to use the surnames of relatives and friends as christian names for children. The Puritan revolution, once more, introduced a perfect inundation of Habba-kuks and Obadiahs, Kerenhappuchs and Hephzibahs; not to mention

those quaint combinations like *Bind-their-kings-in-chains* or *Hew-Agag-in-pieces-before-the-Lord*. What we have to inquire regarding Edward, therefore, is this:—at what point of our history did it first arise, and by what special set of circumstances has it survived among us to the present day, amid all the manifold revolutions to which our nomenclature has since been subjected?

Probably no English christian name now commonly employed in our midst has a longer or more uninterrupted pedigree behind it than that of Edward. It is one of the very few which date back to the early English (or so-called Anglo-Saxon) period before the Norman Conquest: and unlike Alfred, Edgar, or Oswald, which were unknown during many centuries, and have only lately revived under the influence of the prevailing fashion for recondite appellations, it has been used continuously and commonly in hundreds of English households ever since its first introduction. Edmund is the only other early English name, so far as I know, which has fared at all equally well; and Edmund, though it has always steadily maintained itself in use, has never enjoyed the same wide-spread popularity as Edward. The origin and history of such a name must therefore surely be worth consideration in the few minutes that still remain to me before I catch that 3.15 train.

Edward is one of the old royal names of the West-Saxon kings, the kings descended from Cerdic, and including Ecgberht, Ælfred, and Eadgar:—the line of English kings whose Teutonic blood still flows in the veins of Queen Victoria. The West-Saxon dynasty generally fluctuated in its devotion between *Æthel*, ‘noble,’ and *Ead* ‘rich.’ Like most of their Teutonic kinsmen, they employed these syllables to form names with certain other significant words, such as *bald*, ‘a prince,’ *wulf*, ‘a wolf,’ *berht*, ‘bright,’ or *stan*, ‘a stone’: and so long as the compound looked like others of its class, they were not very particular whether it contained much sense or not. For example, Æthelwulf, ‘the noble wolf,’ had three elder sons, all of whom he called after his own cognomen, with a slight variation in the last half of the compound, Æthelbald, Æthelberht, Æthelred,—‘the noble prince,’ ‘the nobly bright,’ and ‘noble council;’ while his youngest he named Ælfred, or ‘elf-council,’ that is to say, divinely wise, not unlike the Greek Sophocles. On the other hand, Ælfred named his son Eadward, ‘the rich guard,’ and Eadward again called his three children Æthelstan, Eadmund (‘rich protection’), and Eadred. Hence sprang a whole line of Eadwigs (‘rich victory’), Eadgars (‘rich spear’), and Eadwards. This mode of varying the royal name may be compared to the changes rung upon George, Georgina, Ernest, Ernestina, Augustus and Augusta, under the early Hanoverians;

or those on Victor, Victoria, Victorina, Alexander, Alexandra, Alexandrina, Albert, Alberta, and so forth under the present royal house.

Eadward or Edward, then, means originally 'noble guard,' and descends to us from the earliest English times. The last syllable, *ward*, is still in use as a verb, meaning to defend, and as a passive noun, in the sense of a person defended, at least in the legal phrase, guardian and ward. But the Norman-French form, 'to guard,' has nearly ousted 'to ward' out of our language, leaving it only in a few poetical or rhetorical senses; though warden still holds its place sturdily by the side of guardian. Just in like manner, we yet retain the double forms guile and wile, guise and wise, gage and wage; while the French word *gager* is the same as our *wager*, and the word which printers and dictionaries insist upon spelling *gauge* should be *guage*, a by-form of *wage*. So once more, *Guillaume* is the Romance dress of Wilhelm or William, and *Gautier* of Walter, *guerre* of war, and *guêpe* of wasp (*vespa*). But if I wander away after this fashion, the 3.15 will be down upon me long before I have half finished with Edward Chapman Allington. Let me return at once to my proper subject.

Eadward was the name borne by the last but one of our native English kings, the son of Æthelred the Unredy (or Ill-advised, for the spelling 'Unready' only countenances a foolish linguistic blunder); and as Eadward was a saint and a confessor, that is to say, next-door to a martyr, it would naturally stand a very good chance of survival, being doubly countenanced by the throne and the Church. But even before Eadward's time a great change had passed over English nomenclature. The Danish dynasty of Cnut had introduced a number of names, such as Swegen, Harold, and Biorn, many of which still survive as surnames. And though an immense swarm of true English names survived this first conquest, yet the Norman invasion, a generation later, suddenly changed the whole spirit of nomenclature in England. Our rough ancestors soon began to find their homely Dudda, and Tata, and Deorwyn, and Dunne, and Mæg, and Hwite, less high-sounding and fashionable than the new French introductions of John, Richard, Robert, Henry, Thomas, Ralph, Baldwin, and Stephen. The names of the Norman or Angevin kings and nobles soon became common amongst their English 'boors' and serfs, so that shortly after the Conquest one meets with such entries as 'William, son of Eadmer,' or 'Geoffrey, son of Wulfward,' where an English father christens his child by a new-fangled foreign name. In this inundation of Norman nomenclature, Edward and Edmund went nigh to founder, like many another good old English form; just as now the Georges and

Alberts threaten to extinguish more than one honest old-fashioned name.

A lucky chance, however, came to rescue them from destruction. Henry III., the most alien in heart of all our Angevin kings, who spent his whole time and energy in vain efforts to recover the continental dominions lost by his father John—Henry III. was, after his fashion, a deeply religious man, and did special honour, by a curious contradiction (as Mr. Freeman points out), to two purely English saints. One of these was Edward the Confessor, whose Abbey Church of Westminster Henry rebuilt in the shape in which we still see it, only slightly enlarged by the Renaissance chapel of his Tudor successor Henry VII. The other was St. Edmund, king of the East Anglians, murdered during the first Danish invasion by the heathen Scandinavians, and duly enshrined as a martyr in the town of Bury St. Edmunds, which takes its title from his relics. After these two saints Henry named his sons, Edward I., and Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. The great Plantagenet, the first of our later kings who bore an English name, handed it down in turn to his son and grandson; and Edward thus became almost as great a favourite as Henry, both with the royal family and with the people at large. And thus it happens that the old Anglo-Saxon designation has descended to our own days, and has at length found a bearer, among thousands of others, in our present subject, the unknown E. C. Allington, of Didcot Junction.

When I first sat down upon this bench, making pencil notes for this article in my pocket-book, I had intended to go on with sundry remarks upon Mr. Allington's local habitation, as well as upon his name; but here, I declare, is the porter ringing a most vociferous bell close to my ear, and loudly announcing the approach of that 3.15 train, just as if we had not all of us been waiting for it this half-hour past. I shall only have time to collar my portmanteau, struggle with it up to the van—for it would be too much to expect that the Company's servants are going to carry it for me—and jump into the carriage before it starts. Happily, I have a good stock of best white foolscap in my desk; and having nothing else to do at the hotel this evening, I shall not explore the smoky recesses of Birmingham, where I mean to spend the night, but shall amuse myself by writing down these rough notes, which I can correct and revise at leisure, where memory fails me, in my own library at home when I return to town. For, in spite of appearances to the contrary, I will frankly confess that I do not carry the whole English Chronicle and the Diplomatarium Ævi Saxonici word for word in my head. I shall jot down as much as I can compose *off-hand*, and then fill in the details from books afterwards. The

result you will have before you, benevolent reader, when you glance at this page; and I trust you will excuse its imperfections when you consider that it was mostly thought out in a hurried half-hour at Didcot Junction.

And now that I am sitting more quietly, three hours later, in the comfortable writing-room of my hotel at Birmingham, let me add that every one of you, my good readers, carries about with him, engraved on his card, exactly such an interesting fossil as that which belongs to Mr. E. C. Allington. If you will take the trouble to inquire into its origin and history, you will find a thousand details of immense interest clustering around the name which you have borne since your childhood, probably without a thought as to its meaning or antecedents. It will pay you well to look up its earlier pedigree: and as you will doubtless possess a number of definite facts as to the origin of your family, which I could only conjecture in the case of this stray name, you will be able to do a great deal more for your own designations than I have been able to do for my specimen instance. But I must also add, before I close, warned by past experience when writing on similar subjects, that I cannot undertake to send everyone of you a private letter, as long as this article, containing a full account of your christian and surname, and tracing your origin up to a distinguished follower of William the Conqueror. If you want to know all about your own name, the honest way to learn is not by asking some one else to take the trouble for you, but by a careful study of Mr. Bardsley, Miss Yonge, Mr. Lower, and Mr. Isaac Taylor (to all of whom I must acknowledge my obligations), as well as by constant reference to the original Anglo-Saxon and mediæval documents.

J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

A Night in the Highway.

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

OF course we mean Ratcliffe Highway—there is but one highway known all over the globe, talked of at every sea-port, British and foreign—the pride of every able-bodied seaman, the haven of rest and beer and bad language, the world of music-rooms, and dancing dens and drinking shops, to which so many blue jackets look forward as the happy land of ease and recreation after a long cruise.

The St. George Street of last week is not greatly changed from the Ratcliffe Highway of twenty years ago; time has not staled its infinite variety; the streets debouching right and left of it are as dark and dense as ever; and the new generation are still as murky figures there, part and parcel of the locality, and of no other part of London with which we are acquainted. Change of name has not wrought any especial change in the character of this motley neighbourhood; the men of all nations, who will call it the Highway to all time, keep to its old manners and customs; and the standard of morality is what it has been, and what it must always be, with such terrible surroundings. Even grim murder still stalks abroad here, and James Simms, who was hanged this April for cutting the throat of ‘Big Annie’ at the bar of the ‘White Hart,’ is only the feeble shadow of John Williams, who killed by wholesale in the Highway in 1812.

A recent visit to Ratcliffe assures us, however, of one earnest effort to effect some good in this locality—an effort which has not been without its measure of success, if not pressed down and running over. We allude to the humble imitation of the Coffee Palace, designated here by the more friendly appellation of ‘The Stranger’s Rest,’ of which there are at least two in the neighbourhood, although for some mysterious reason only one was open and doing a fair amount of business on the evening of our expedition. Here Jack can read his newspaper, write his letters, and smoke his pipe, in a well-lighted, well-warmed room, ‘free, gratis, and for nothing;’ but the drink he calls for must not be alcoholic, and should there be any singing it will probably partake of the character of a little hymn, in which he will be asked to join. It is possible that this is too great a reaction from the orgies of the public-houses in the vicinity, and the ordinary sailor, we fear, will shrink away from the decorum of establishments where ladies are scarce, and where not an atom’s worth of fun is to be obtained.

And it must be borne in mind that, as a rule, the sailor likes his amusement hot and strong, and plenty of it, and is on shore—especially if he be Greek, Spanish, or Italian—exceedingly quarrelsome without it, and far too ready with his knife. The shutting-up of the extraordinary dens, through which it was our mission to wander a few nights ago, would probably tend to greater harm amongst the floating population of these streets than doubling their number, and it is doubtless for this reason that much which the law would not tolerate in any other thoroughfare of the metropolis is quietly ignored down the Highway. The great question to our mind is, what form the amusement shall take in this direction? for here the lowest class music-hall of London, or the cheapest and dirtiest of theatres, would be an improvement in the style of entertainment, and an evidence of moral progress, in comparison with the existing institutions of the place.

‘The Stranger’s Rest’ is too high a step in the right direction as a start off: it is a huge stride which a great number of sailors will not attempt to keep up with, though it is far from a failure, and remains a source of much jealousy and heartburning amongst the publicans and sinners. One poor sinner, begging hard for drink, and yet already drunk, thus apostrophised this temperance innovation of the Highway:

‘Cuss the “Stranger’s Rest,” it’s the ruin of us poor gals! I wolloped a snow-ball through the winder a month or so ago, and then run like the devil down John’s Hill. They’—with a hideous grin we can see now—‘guessed it was *me*, but they couldn’t prove it nohow—When you can prove it, says I, summons me, not afore.’

Whether the Stranger’s Rests and the Sailor’s Homes in the vicinity have done more damage to the public-houses and places of amusement than the especial hard times from which the East End is suffering, it is difficult to guess at in a flying visit; but many of the dancing-rooms were but thinly attended, and the far-famed ‘Paddy’s Goose’ had limited its attractions for the nonce to the shop and the front bar.

‘It won’t answer to open our room just now,’ said the landlord, ‘it wouldn’t pay the gas.’

The landlord’s contemporaries and brother ‘bungs’ were of a different opinion, and fought hard for the patronage which ‘Paddy’s Goose’ had closed its doors upon. They were not doing well, as a rule—we counted only two overflowing houses in the course of our pilgrimage—but they were fighting desperately against bad luck, and the teetotal opposition over the way; and the Highway towards the small hours was resonant with music.

One house, ‘The White Bear,’ appeared to be particularly

unlucky, for its large room was deserted by all humanity save a brass band, which was blowing into empty space with considerable vigour, and with not even a waiter to listen, until our arrival, when he skipped rapidly up the stairs after us and met us descending again, scared by the desolation upon which we had intruded and at the horror of our position with a band and a ball-room all to ourselves.

In the streets there were more distraction and life ; and there was one vacant plot of ground where, illuminated by petroleum, the swings and roundabouts were doing a fair amount of business. The rifle practice down various gas-pipe bores was slow and uncertain, however ; and 'The Hoop and Grapes' adjacent, though it announced a concert free to all the world, was but indifferently attended, the patrons not mustering during the period of our visit a greater number than eight, who huddled round two large coke fires, and talked of the weather and of Peace's recent execution and confessions. 'The Hoop and Grapes' appeared to be a music-hall in an embryo condition, or else it had known its better days and was now running rapidly to seed. 'Five years ago,' we forget in whose time, but it was in the time of somebody whom our informant thought we should surely know by name and reputation, 'we had three lady singers here as well as the reglars—crack singers, I can tell you. Ah ! and the Fire King too—everybody knows the Fire King—well he was here as well ; and this room's been as chock-full as ever it could stick.'

There was certainly a beggarly account of empty forms and bare tables now, and the manager, who sang one or two ballads from a small stage at the extremity of the room, seemed depressed in consequence. The entertainment provided was not wholly bad, and the degree of intercourse existent, and expected to exist, between the company and the guests was not a little startling. The lady singer—there was one lady singer in a crimson silk dress and Margate sand boots—appeared in the body of the hall immediately after her song and offered cigars for sale at threepence each, and asked modestly for 'a drink,' with a 'You'll excuse the liberty, I hope' that had a certain amount of grace in it, and stifled protest. This lady and the manager were the only members of the company who did not directly solicit fees after each song, and the cap came round pretty regularly from the rest ; and a gentleman remaining the whole evening would probably find that his gifts would 'tot' up to an amount far in excess of any sum that could be reasonably charged for admission at the doors, even if he did not stand drinks to the scarlet lady or the manager.

The singing would have been fairly up to the music-hall standard

had it been less powerful and resonant; but the shouting and shrieking from every member of the company, combined with the sledge-hammer action of a most energetic accompanist at a piano, were terrible to listen to within a reasonable distance. In the Highway some fifty yards distant it might have been attractive to the passers by, and we imagine it was for that reason that 'Hail smiling Morn' was rendered in excessive forte, and that 'The Village Blacksmith' and 'I tickled her under the chin' could have been distinctly heard by the crew of any ship in the adjacent docks, and were wholly lacking in that pathos and repose which give those compositions their highest charm.

The professional members of 'The Hoop and Grapes' were superior to the visitors who strolled in now and then, and warmed themselves at the fires; the latter were very seedy, disreputable atoms of humanity, who glanced suspiciously at ourselves, knew us at once for strangers, and were, one or two of them, curious as to the reason of our presence. Dock labourers were in the majority, and a black woman flauntingly attired came in with two companions as gaily dressed as herself, and exchanged good-evenings with the manager and the soprano, treated her companions to ale, and sallied forth again like a restless spirit of darkness, to return a few minutes afterwards in the same company, order more ale, and depart again. There was another female of depressing character to render our visit memorable—a shivering, barefooted, ragged wench who crept as far as the open door of the concert-room, listened attentively, looked wistfully at the coke fires, and flitted back into the street—a dirty Peri shut from a very indifferent Paradise—to return presently, and generally when the manager was occupied upon the stage and could not order her off as a young person whom it would be an unprofitable task to welcome as a guest. Not that the manager was sparing of his welcomes, for he was of a persevering and industrious order of mankind, and added to his other duties that of announcing the attractions of the concert-hall to the disbelievers in the streets, who stood in little groups outside and stared at him.

There was no charge for his wondrous entertainment. There was a strong company of singers, serious and comic, inside: there were the celebrated Lancashire clog-dancers from all the famous halls in the United Kingdom; there was the favourite and popular vocalist Miss Julia Weston—Miss Julia Weston, ladies and gentlemen—also from all the famous halls in the United Kingdom, and specially engaged at an enormous expense (Miss Julia Weston was the lady in crimson who sold cigars, and asked for drinks between the parts, and had really an excellent voice, but as pierce-

ing to the ear as a railway whistle); and there were other attractions too numerous for one individual to mention, if the public would take the speaker's word for it, and step inside and see.

This touter, general manager, and principal vocalist, serious and comic, had been a tailor's 'cutter' in more prosperous times, and had taken to the 'music profession' for a while until trade was better for him. He had wanted something to do, and this was a post which suited him, for the lack of anything better mayhap. He liked it well enough—if it wasn't for the barking at the doors—he called it emphatically 'barking'—which was trying to his voice, and took the steam out of him—awful! He could stand it all very well, but the barking—which was certainly *infra dig.* even for Ratcliffe Highway, and hard upon an individual anxious to serve his employer well,—and at the top of his lungs, so long as they would last out.

From 'The Hoop and Grapes' to 'The Jolly Sailor' is not five minutes' walk, and here we discovered life in plenty, and an air of rollicking festivity pervading the general community that was for the first five minutes an agreeable change from the free concert-hall we had quitted.

'The Jolly Sailor' was doing a big business, and at big prices, considering the locality and the company assembled; but there was no charge for admission to any of the amusements in the Highway, and the proprietors have to make their profit in a manner indirect. 'The Jolly Sailor' has at the back of the bar a large and well-lighted dancing-room, and here we found a band of five or six instrumentalists in an orchestra, stuck up very close to the ceiling, discoursing eloquent music to the company. Polkas and waltzes were the dances in vogue, and these were carried out in various ways—many of them in a purely extempore fashion—by the sailors and the lasses that love sailors. The ball-room was noisy but not disorderly; there was some rough horse-play, and a great deal of smart slapping of masculine faces, in the 'intervals;' but everyone was good-tempered, if vociferous, and the waiters, who seemed to act as masters of the ceremonies, had no trouble with the visitors save to attend to their orders, which were numerous and varied.

'The Jolly Sailor' kept up fairly to its title, for the men and women were particularly jolly: they came up and shook hands as though they had known us all our lives; and in a room full of excited folk of all nations, it is as well, we may add, to appear as if you had known everybody, too, for about the same period of time. It will probably lead to standing drinks—'you'll stand us a drink' is the one awful cry of the Highway—and he is an un-

wise philosopher who always turns a deaf ear to the demand, and will certainly meet with indignities that may very much surprise him. 'The Jolly Sailor' bears the best character in the Highway, and certainly it was a peaceful dwelling-place in comparison with others in the vicinity, though we do not strictly recommend it to any individual 'seeing life,' and especially 'life' on his own account.

In one orderly establishment we heard the following conversation which clearly demonstrated to us—if we had had any doubts before—that the company is not always as select as it might be, despite the care of the proprietors.

'How much did you take?'

'I only took seven pounds,' was the reply. 'The old fool had it all in a bag, and I might have grabbed the lot.'

'Why didn't you?'

'Well,' was the response, '*I thought I'd leave him something to go on with!*'

Who can say there is not charity and human kindness amongst 'the lowly and degraded of our kind,' after this dialogue, every word of which we have set down without extenuation or malice—a hard fact telling its own story!

The general community of 'The Jolly Sailor,' we may add, plumes itself upon its respectability—its superiority to the other houses of entertainment in the Highway.

'I don't go to "The Prussian Eagle,"' we heard one young lady in a smart hat and feathers say to a companion; 'there's too much quarrelling there for me. And as for "The Prince Regent" over the way—well, that's where the Greeks go, and I hate them nasty Greeks like pison. Do you know any Greeks?'

'No,' was the reply.

'That's right! don't,' said this young lady of Hellenic dislikes; 'there—I wouldn't keep company with a Greek for a pension!'

She was not particular as to the quality of her company, however, and danced most vigorously with every specimen of nationality that presented itself and solicited the honour of her hand for the next dance, a hand which she generally bestowed in the true Ratcliffe fashion—with a sounding thwack on her partner's cheeks or ears, as a beginning of the business. These slaps were generally taken good-humouredly; but there were exceptions to the rule, and one hasty-tempered individual, who looked like a pilot at his business, and in the height of a storm, struck back savagely with his clenched fist; and would have certainly 'floored' the lady on the spot had she not jumped back very quickly and eluded him.

The fun was fast and furious at 'The Jolly Sailor' when we

turned our backs upon it—some bright-faced young soldiers from the Tower we were sorry to see enter as we left the premises, and there was a rush made towards them, followed by much kissing and embracing, and a general exchange of caps, by way of friendly salutation. Oh! but they love the military too in Ratcliffe Highway.

At 'The Prince Regent,' a public-house and dancing-room on the opposite side of the street, we found business far from brisk; but the house had its own peculiar class of patrons nevertheless. Here the saloon was on the first floor, a long, narrow room, with a small stage at the extremity, on which four musicians were seated, with four measures of beer by their sides. There were no Greeks at the Greek house that we could perceive, and the dancing was scarcely as fast and furious as at the establishment across the road—indeed, at half-past ten that evening it might be termed somewhat slow and tame, inasmuch as one or two bold-faced damsels had seized upon the waiters for lack of partners more eligible, and were whirling languidly round the room with them. It was a strange medley of characters in that upstairs room—the disreputable predominating. One slatternly mother had brought her baby with her, and was wandering to and fro with her offspring in all kinds of odd postures, but generally upside down; and between two ladies unbonneted and ringleted, and in the most arsenical of green merinos, sat a shabby old market woman, with an enormous basket before her, full of oranges, and whose stolid, sleepy countenance assured us that the amusements of the establishment were palling upon her very considerably.

Still there was revelry at 'The Prince Regent,' and a laudable desire to offer to its patrons a special attraction, which had taken the shape this evening of a fancy costume—a page's or prince's dress from the region of burlesque, all black velvet trunks and gold fringe, and much pink silk stocking. The lady thus adorned was a good-looking young Jewess, who wore her hair loose down her back, cataract-fashion—a lady who sang ballads on the stage at times, and jumped lightly from the platform to the body of the hall afterwards, and took part in the round dances, smiling at all new-comers, and not too proud to propose the health and prosperity of any gentleman who felt disposed to offer her a drink and pay for it.

'To prevent mistakes, please pay at the time of ordering,' was marked up at some of the places of entertainment in the Highway—a precautionary method not without its advantages, when ladies order drinks very freely, and point to the gentlemen who *are to pay for them*, and whose means of fulfilling their obliga-

tions are not always too strikingly apparent. Still, it is difficult to judge by appearances in the Highway; and whether the rough, ill-clad fellow in the pea-jacket be 'out of collar,' or a wolf from Tiger Bay, or have a hundred and odd pounds loose in notes in his trousers pockets, it is not easy to determine at first sight.

There was a certain amount of restlessness about 'The Prince Regent' that was remarkable. People ran in and out promiscuously; faces that we had seen at 'The Jolly Sailor' and 'The Hoop and Grapes' peered round the door in search of missing friends, or to make sure that the chance of a drink was not to be found in this direction, and then vanished again. Only the mother with the baby, the orange-woman, and the excited Jewess in black and gold, spinning round with her partner, and her black tresses waving in the wind, were the constant folk in the establishment, unless a melancholy and grimy girl at a side table be taken into account.

'Wot's the matter with you, Jenny?' was the inquiry, not unkindly put to this young lady by a companion of her own age and sex, and of about the same degree of griminess; 'yer ain't yerself to-night.'

'I know I ain't.'

'How's that?'

'I've lost my chap to-day.'

'What, Bill?'

'Yes, Bill,' was the answer. 'He sailed this mornin', and I went to see him off—went all round the ——'—here a most formidable adjective escaped her—'docks, ship after ship'—more adjectives of a similar degree of strength—'and then —— me, if I hadn't been walkin' away from him all the time, for he was in the werry fust on 'em; but I saw him.'

'How long is he going for?'

'A year,' said the girl sadly.

'Then you won't see *him* again.'

'Won't I!' cried the girl, looking up defiantly and passionately, 'don't you make any ——'—another adjective—'mistake. Oh! yes, I shall see him, no —— fear of that!'

This young woman was one of the worst class of society's prowlers, but her 'chap' had softened for a while the little fragment of a heart that was still left to her. She was laughing loudly with half-a-dozen Italian sailors before we left, and getting intoxicated at their expense with marvellous rapidity. We wondered, as we stole out of 'The Prince Regent,' if Bill on board his ship was cherishing any fond reminiscence of this lost, dirty

sheep, and speculating as to how his Jenny was getting on without him.

‘Think of me when I’m at sea,
And I will think of you,’

is the burden of the last nautical song, we believe ; and Bill might be as true to the text as this poor woman.

Proceeding south, we discovered ‘The Prussian Eagle’ to be about four minutes’ walk from ‘The Prince Regent,’ and situated down Ship Alley—a narrow turning leading from the Highway into Wellclose Square. We had already heard that ‘The Prussian Eagle’ was a quarrelsome house, and it was not surprising to find a lady, loud of lung and demonstrative of gesture, being hustled unceremoniously into the street as we arrived, and threatening dire destruction to her assailants at the first opportunity. She had become too disorderly for the company above stairs, it appeared upon inquiry, and the ‘chucker-out’ had escorted her at once to Ship Alley, where she raved and stormed for re-admittance till a policeman arrived and induced her to depart, which she did with an indignant protest and a considerable number of oaths.

‘The Prussian Eagle’ was in far from a subdued frame of mind, despite the withdrawal of this one obnoxious element : there was considerable excitement in the long, shabby room above stairs, and the voices of the revellers rose high above the brass band, braying on a kind of kitchen dresser on the right of the entrance doors. There were several disputes of various kinds in various stages of development ; and possibly the young lady at ‘The Jolly Sailor’ was right in her determination not to patronise too frequently this house. Here there were a greater number of foreign sailors, and sailors and women of a lower class, than we had seen assembled hitherto ; and if there were a shade more blasphemy and general viciousness of demeanour, it was surely here ; but then we had seen the guests of the opposition houses under the influence of a less amount of drink, and at a more respectable hour of the night. ‘The Prussian Eagle’ dancing-room was a sorry sight enough, and yet what amusement could replace it and be acceptable to the heterogeneous, half-mad class with which it was full that night ? Quarrelsome as these men and women were, a lively waltz acted like oil upon the troubled waters, and presently the majority of the company would be gyrating swiftly and gracefully, some of the foreigners indulging in the most extraordinary *pas seuls* and fancy steps. The cry for drink was strong amongst the women, and as universal as at the other rooms, but appeared not to be as

generally responded to—cash in hand amongst the male sex not being so readily apparent. Still there was a considerable degree of attention from the gentlemen to the ladies, and when spirits or ale were proffered, the fair recipient invariably beckoned one or two of her companions less fortunate than herself, and shared the beverage with them. One good-looking Irishwoman, very shabbily attired, and with a rough, unkempt head of hair growing all kinds of ways and suspiciously gritty in appearance, seemed to be the ruling spirit of the place, and to be on speaking terms and cheek-slapping terms with the whole of the community. A bold-faced, dark-eyed woman, with the ready wit of her country at her fingers' ends, she sat nursing a valuable Maltese dog and indulging in a running commentary of chaff upon all and everything that came beneath her notice. When she was tired of her dog—which was called Macaroni out of compliment to an Italian friend who had made her a present of it—she placed the little animal on the table, where it ran about amongst the various glasses and lapped at the contents' of several—a dog as fond of drink as any poor gin-drenched soul in this unholy neighbourhood. Macaroni was the pride of its mistress's heart; its coat was scrupulously clean and snowy white, and a small blue satin ribbon round its neck added greatly to its personal attractions. If the lady-proprietor had expended half as much pains on her own appearance she would have been more presentable to Ratcliffe society in general, and to 'The Prussian Eagle' in particular; but she had lavished all her stock of soap and water, all her time in hair curling and brushing, on Macaroni, and there had been little leisure left or little inclination for her own adornment. Notwithstanding this, she was the belle of 'The Prussian Eagle,' and received more than an ordinary amount of attention, and an extraordinary amount of stimulant.

The amusements of the house seemed somewhat varied, and a poor, pinched little child stepped into the middle of the room after one of the dances, and sang, in a feeble treble, 'Who'll buy my flowers,' to the bold and brassy accompaniment of the cornet of the band.

After this ballad, and an encore of the last verse most vociferously redemanded, the singer went round from table to table collecting halfpence for herself, accompanied by a hungry-eyed and watchful mother, who was evidently deeply interested in the amount of the receipts; and then the noisy voices of the men, the shrieking falsettos of the women, made the night hideous until the band brayed forth again and the dance was vigorously resumed. The lady-proprietor of Macaroni did not dance during our stay; she sat

huddled beneath a thick grey plaid shawl of the true Glasgie Saltmarket type, and launched her sarcasms at the passers-by, or 'chaffed' the waiters, or played with Macaroni.

'You wouldn't think this lad was my brother,' she said, turning suddenly to us, and indicating a heavy, beetle-browed waiter who was standing before us, with the idea firmly impressed upon his mind that we had not drunk enough for the dignity of the establishment.

'No—but he's Irish for all that, we fancy,' we ventured to assert.

The waiter's feelings were hurt instantly, and he said with a strange gesture of contempt that was remarkable in such a place, 'I'm a long way off of *her*—I'm no Irishman—I'm a long way off of *her*!'

His accent was harsh and bitter, and we suggested Germany as his native land.

'No, I'm not German,' he said, almost as indignantly, 'not a bit of German. I'm Dutch. I've been taken for German, though, I've been taken for French, but never have I been taken for an Irishman before. I'm a long way off of *her*,' and, with another disparaging gesture towards the lady, he marched off discontentedly.

Ten minutes afterwards he suddenly reappeared at our elbow, grave and serious still.

'It's the first time in my life, mind you, I was ever taken for an Irishman,' he said, nodding his head at us, 'and I must make a note of that. An Irishman, indeed! I'm real Dutch, and my father and mother were Dutch too. What shall I get you to drink?'

We left 'The Prussian Eagle' without making an enemy of our sensitive Dutchman, who bade us good-night amicably—perhaps being glad to get our vilifying presence from the sphere of his exertions, or mollified by the *pour-boire* which it seemed our duty to bestow after so grievous an injury to his feelings. Our departure gave rise to more comment than was absolutely necessary: one shrill voice screamed over the top balusters after us, 'Good-night, my sou'-west moon-rakers,' and Macaroni and its mistress followed us at a distance down Ship Alley into the Highway, evidently suspicious of our movements, or anxious to see in which way our destination lay.

When she saw that we were aware of her attention, she stopped and waved her hand.

'Good-night to you. You'll know where to find us now, won't you? Always at home—good-night—good-night;' and then, with a

merry peal of laughter, she retreated into her den, and the swing glass-doors closed on her.

The last house upon the amusements of which we intruded that evening was called 'The Rose and Crown'—which was a fair or unfair copy of the others in the neighbourhood, and which is the first of the places of entertainment in the Highway starting from the Tower in an easterly direction. Here the lateness of the hour, or the slackness of the trade, had caused a diminution in the number of the customers, although a band of four on a top shelf was playing to some eight or ten most lively couples.

The dancing at 'The Rose and Crown' was certainly extra vigorous, and the high leaps and bounds of two or three ladies and gentlemen were marvellous to behold. For some unknown reason this was called a Spanish house, but no one acknowledged to a Spanish extraction; and although several of the lady dancers smoked paper cigarettes whilst they waltzed, they were unmistakeably of Ratcliffe birth and breed. Directly the dance was concluded, the leader of the band dropped off his perch and rushed at us with an open box for contributions to the music, and was profuse of thanks to all those who favoured him with their donations.

'We've been uncommon busy earlier in the evening,' another subordinate informed us, 'but, oh gord, you should have been here arf-an-hour ago. We had some Malays drop in, and blest if any pantermine was up to it. You'd have bust yourself with larfin' at 'em.'

We regretted missing the Malays, but we had seen enough of Ratcliffe life and character for all that—and for all time. It remains with us a memorable experience that we have thought deserving of some record in these pages—a leaf from a guide-book, as it were, to a dark labyrinthine shadow-land, into which but little light appears to filter its way. If we have directed any extra attention to this Ratcliffe and Shadwell locality—a wild and fierce region of uncivilisation and vice—we shall be glad, for the labours of the philanthropist, the social reformer, and the moralist are wanted very sadly here.

It is a problem what is best to be done with this huge floating population of the East End of the metropolis, and whether entertainment societies, coffee palaces, and people's reading-rooms would score many points in opposition to the coarse, garish attractions of the public-houses and their dancing-rooms; but that something should be done to render vice less demonstrative and intrusive, robbery and violence less easy of accomplishment, and to raise the standard of amusements—and real English

amusements—by ever so slight a degree, appears a stern necessity of the times in which we live.

Few places have improved less, and few require more improvement, than the benighted sphere behind the busy docks and warehouses due East.

Maybud.

I.

BLUE are the cornflowers, red are the poppies ;
Green are the lithe tender stalks of the wheat ;
Thick hang the boughs on the edge of the coppice ;
The perfumes of bean and of clover are sweet :
And sweet are the eyes of my bright little Maybud
Sitting flushed in the hedgerow out of the heat.

II.

A foxglove aspiring droops on her shoulder,
A bold ox-eyed daisy kisses her feet,
A thrush in the hazel pipes loud to greet her ;
His song, like the delicate perfumes, is sweet :
Sweet, too, is the prattle of light-hearted Maybud,
Crown'd with flowers in the hedgerow out of the heat.

III.

Ah ! Harsh are the dun clouds, swift is the March snow,
On woe-stricken faces stinging gusts beat.
Lost is the treasure laid low in the chill earth ;
E'en the name on her breast is hidden in sleet :
No more need she hasten, dear dead little Maybud,
To the shade of the hedgerow out of the heat.

WILLIAM SENIOR.

The Quintain.

My better parts
Are all thrown down ; and that which here stands up
Is but a quintain : a mere lifeless block.—*As You Like It*, i. 2.

THOUGH in process of time the quintain became a mere pastime and a source of amusement both to player and spectator, it was originally strictly a military exercise, and occupied an important place in the severe course of schooling that the young aspirant to knighthood had to go through in feudal times. Almost as soon as the youth of gentle blood began to learn his page's duty, he was set on horseback, and taught to ride at the ring, or to risk the sandbag and wooden sabre of the 'Turk's head' quintain, till, from constant training of hand and eye, the young knight, by the time he had won his golden spurs, found it no very difficult matter to couch a lance in the lists, and to strike with true aim the helmet or shield of his opponent in the joust.

The quintain that tyros in chivalry originally practised at was nothing more than a trunk of a tree, or a post set up for the purpose ; then a shield was fixed to this post, or often a spear was used, to which the shield was bound, and the tilters' object was to hit this shield in such a way as to break the ligatures and bear it to the ground. 'In process of time,' says Strutt, 'this diversion was improved, and instead of the staff and the shield, the resemblance of a human figure, carved in wood, was introduced. To render the appearance of this figure more formidable, it was generally made in the likeness of a Turk or a Saracen, armed at all points, bearing a shield upon his left arm, and brandishing a club or a sabre with his right. Hence this exercise was called by the Italians "running at the armed man," or "at the Saracen."' This is 'the Turk' of the old fifteenth century poet, whose apparently bloodthirsty lines read so strangely familiar to us after so much of the Eastern Question nowadays.

Lepe on thy foe; look if he dare abide.
Will he not flee? wounde him: make woundes wide;
Hew of his honde: his legge: his theyhs: his armys:
It is the Turk, though he be sleyn noon harm is.

In tilting at the Saracen, the horseman had to direct his lance with great adroitness—Strutt goes on to tell us—and make his stroke on the forehead of the figure, between the eyes, or on the nose; 'for if he struck wide of these parts, especially upon the

shield, the quintain turned about with much velocity, and, in case he was not exceedingly careful, would give him a severe blow upon the back with the wooden sabre held in the right hand, which was considered as highly disgraceful to the performer, while it excited the laughter and ridicule of the spectators.'

The authorities are all at variance about the derivation of the word quintain, as well as the source from which the exercise was introduced into Britain. Some say it was a Greek game named after its inventor Quintas, about whom nothing is known; equally absurd is the derivation of Minshew, who thinks it derives its name from *Quintus*, either because it was the last of the 'pentathloi,' or because it was engaged in on the fifth, or last, day of the Olympic games: while sticklers for a home derivation seem to have agreed that it was a corruption of the Welsh 'gwyntyn,' meaning a vane, till Dr. Charles Mackay recently published his book on the Gaelic etymology of the English language, and argued that the name of our pastime owes its origin to the Gaelic *guin*, which means to pierce.

Where doctors so differ it is unnecessary to say more than that an exercise something like quintain seems to have been in common use among the Romans, who caused their young military men to practise at it twice in the day, with weapons much heavier than those employed in actual warfare.

Strutt points out that, in the code of laws compiled by the Emperor Justinian, the quintain is mentioned as a well known sport; and allowed to be continued upon condition that, at it, pointless spears only should be employed, contrary to the ancient usage, which, it seems, required them to have heads or points.

Dr. Kennett was so convinced of the Roman origin of the game that he says he never saw the quintain practised in any part of the country but where Roman ways ran, or where Roman garrisons had been placed.

While tyros in chivalry were practising hard at the Saracen to acquire skill, and older knights were charging it in the constant training needed to retain that skill, burgesses and yeomen began to adopt the quintain as a merry pastime, and village greens were beginning to resound with uproarious mirth as the staff or sand-bag whirled round to belabour the clumsy rider who had failed to hit the proper part of the Turk's forehead. What made the quintain such a favourite pastime of the common folk, was the rule of chivalry that forbade any person under the rank of an esquire to enter the lists as a combatant at tournament or joust. Accordingly, as the prohibition did not extend to the quintain, young men whose station debarred them from entering the lists set up a simple form of quintain on their village green, and, if they were not able to

procure horses, contented themselves with running at this mark on foot. These village quintains—of which one specimen at least is still preserved, that of Offham, in Kent—consisted only of a cross bar turning on a pivot, with a broad end to strike against, while from the other extremity hung a bag of sand or earth, that swung round and hit the back of a lagging rider. A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' says that the Offham quintain is still in good order; had it not been that a road has been made to pass within a few feet of it, a man might ride at it now. The striking board is not perforated, that is, bored through, but some small round holes about a quarter of an inch deep are cut on it, probably to afford a better hold for the lance, and to prevent its glancing off.

When many joined in running at the quintain, prizes were offered, and the winner was determined by the number and value of the strokes he had made. At the Saracen a stroke on the top of the nose counted three, others less and less, down to the foul stroke that turned the quintain round and disqualified the runner. It was at one of these prize gatherings that the unlucky incident took place that Stowe tells from Mathew Paris. In 1254, the young Londoners, who, the historian tells us, were very expert horsemen, met together one day to run at the quintain for a peacock, a bird very often in those days set up as a prize for the best performer. King Henry the Third's Court being then at Westminster, some of his domestics came into the city to witness the sports. They behaved in a very disgraceful manner, and treated the Londoners with much insolence, calling them cowardly knaves and rascally clowns; conduct which the citizens resented by beating the king's menials soundly. Henry, however, was incensed at the indignity put upon his servants, and not taking into consideration the provocation on their part, fined the city one thousand marks. 'Some have thought these fellows were sent thither purposely to promote a quarrel, it being known that the king was angry with the citizens of London for refusing to join in the crusade.'

Stowe goes on to say that in London this exercise of running at the quintain was practised at all seasons, but more especially at Christmas time. 'I have seen,' continues the author of the 'Survey of London,' 'a quintain set up on Cornhill by Leadenhall, where the attendants of the lords of merry disports have run and made great pastimes; for he that hit not the broad end of the quintain was laughed to scorn, and he that hit it full, if he rode not the faster, had a sound blow upon his neck with a bag full of sand hanged on the other end.'

Though running at the quintain was a common exercise at all festive gatherings of the country people, it was the especial exercise

at marriage rejoicings. Ben Jonson alludes to this when he writes of the bridegroom :—

. . . at quintin he,
In honour of his bridal-tee,
Hath challenged either wide countee.
Come cut and long taile, for there be
Six bachelors as bold as he,
Adjuting to his company ;
And each one hath his livery.

Roberts, in his ‘Popular Antiquities of Wales,’ gives this interesting account of the ancient marriage customs in the Principality :—‘On the day of the ceremony, the nuptial presents having previously been made, and the marriage privately celebrated at an early hour, the signal to the friends of the bridegroom was given by the piper, who was always present on these occasions, and mounted on a horse trained for the purpose ; and the cavalcade being all mounted, set off at full speed, with the piper playing in the midst of them, for the house of the bride. The friends of the bride in the mean time having raised various obstructions to prevent their access to the house of the bride, such as ropes of straw across the road, blocking up the regular one, &c., and the quintain : the rider in passing struck the flat side, and if not dexterous, was overtaken, and perhaps dismounted, by the sandbag, and became a fair object for laughter. The *gwyntyn* was also guarded by champions of the opposite party, who, if it was passed successfully, challenged the adventurers to a trial of skill at one of the four-and-twenty games, a challenge which could not be declined ; and hence to guard the *gwyntyn* was a service of high adventure.’

Laneham, in his ‘Progresses of Queen Elizabeth,’ gives an amusing description of a ‘country bridal,’ which the virgin Queen witnessed when she was at Kenilworth in 1575. After the wedding there ‘was set up in the castle a comely quintane for feats at armes, where, in a great company of young men and lasses, the bridegroom had the first course at the quintane and broke his spear very boldly. But his mare in his manage did a little stumble, that much adoe had his manhood to sit in his saddle. But after the bridegroom had made his course, ran the rest of the band, a while in some order, but soon after tag and rag, cut and long tail ; where the speciality of the sport was to see how some for his slackness had a good bob with the bag, and some for his haste to topple downright and come tumbling to the post ; some striving so much at the first setting out that it seemed a question between man and beast, whether the race should be performed on horseback or on foot ; and some put forth with spurs, would run his race byas,

among the thickest of the throng, that down they came together, hand over head. Another, while he directed his course to the quintane, his judgment would carry him to a mare among the people; another would run and miss the quintane with his staff, and hit the board with his head.'

This interesting old wedding custom continued to be observed at marriages down to comparatively recent times. It is possible that it may still hold a place among the bridal rejoicings in the Principality; at any rate, Mr. John Strange, writing in 1796, ('Archæologia,' vol. i. p. 303), says that 'this sport is still practised at weddings among the better sort of freeholders in Brecknockshire;' and then goes on to describe the variety of the pastime in use there—a few flat planks, erected on a green, against which the young men tilt with long thick sticks, 'striking the stick against the planks with the utmost force in order to break it, where the diversion ends;' a variety of the quintain very like 'the cane game,' at which Richard Cœur de Lion lost his temper on Sunday afternoon outside the walls of Messina in Sicily, while on his way to the Holy Land.

Mr. Anthony Trollope, in one of his Barsetshire novels, makes pleasant fun of old Miss Thorne's attempt to revive the quintain at a rural fête; but, though the novelist makes dire disaster befall the old lady's riders, the old pastime has sometimes been revived in real life, and with success. Indeed, as Mr. Bernhard Smith observes in 'Notes and Queries,' the quintain is probably not so uncommon as is generally supposed. Mr. Smith has seen two—one at Chartley, Lord Ferrers' seat in Staffordshire, and another in a riding house belonging to the late Mr. Harrington at his house near Crawley in Sussex. The 'Times' (August 7, 1827) had a long account of a revival of the old pastime, in which several varieties are described, and of which we may quote a part: 'Viscount and Viscountess Gage gave a grand fête on Friday (August 3, 1827) at their seat at Firle-Place, Sussex, to about a hundred and sixty of the nobility and gentry, at which the ancient game of quintain was revived. The sports commenced by gentlemen riding with light spiked staves at rings and apples suspended by a string, after which they changed their weapons to stout poles, and attacked the two quintains, which consisted of logs of wood fashioned to resemble the head and body of a man, and set upright upon a high bench, on which they were kept by a chain passing through the platform, and having a weight suspended to it, so that if the log was ever struck full and forcibly the figure resumed its seat. One was also divided in the middle, and the upper part, being fixed on a pivot, turned, if not struck in the centre, and

requited its assailant by a blow with a staff, to which was suspended a small bag of flour.

‘The purses for unhorsing this quintain were won by John Slater and Thomas Trebeck, Esqrs. The other figure, which did not turn, offered a lance towards the assailant’s face, and the rider was to avoid the lance and unhorse the quintain at the same time. The purses were won by Sheffield Neave, Esq. and the Hon. John Pelham.

‘A third pair of purses were offered for unhorsing the quintain, by striking on a coloured belt, which hooped round the waist of the figure, thereby raising the weight, which was considerable, by a much shorter lever than when struck higher up. This was a feat requiring great strength and firmness of seat, and though not fairly won according to the rules of the game, the prizes were ultimately assigned to the very spirited exertions of Messrs. Cayley and Gardener.’

Strutt notices a great many games akin to or derived from the quintain, of which perhaps the most interesting were the ‘Water Quintain,’ and ‘Running at the Ring.’

The boat quintain, and tilting at each other upon the water (a favourite pastime still at some sea-bathing places), were introduced by the Normans as amusements for the summer season, and were very soon established favourites among all classes of the people. Fitzstephen describes the exercise as practised by the Londoners of his day during the Easter holidays, when a pole was fixed in the Thames, with a shield strongly attached to it, towards which a boat, with the tilter standing in the bows, was swiftly pulled. If the tilter’s lance struck the shield fairly and broke, all went well; but if otherwise, he was thrown into the water, greatly to the amusement of the people who crowded the bridges, wharves, and houses near the river, and ‘who come,’ says the author, ‘to see the sports and make themselves merry.’

Stowe has often seen ‘in the summer season, upon the river of Thames, some rowed in wherries, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore end, running one against another, and for the most part one or both of them were overthrown and well ducked.’ When Queen Elizabeth visited Sandwich in 1573, ‘certain wallounds that could well swim’ entertained her with a water tilting, in which one of the combatants ‘did overthrow another, at which the Queene had good sport.’

A much more important descendant of the quintain than this laughable pastime was Running at the Ring, a sport demanding all the skill of the quintain, but without its roughness and horse-play. Accordingly, we find that, while Giles and Hodge continued

to urge their dobbins with unabated relish against the whirling board and sandbag, the squire and the courtier transferred their attention to the more delicate exercise, and attained to high skill at it. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'this generous exercise,' as Whitelocke calls it, was reduced to a science, with minute rules and directions on all points of procedure and parts of the equipment necessary.

Randolph, in a letter from Scotland to Secretary Sir William Cecil on December 7, 1561, gives us an account of the pastime as celebrated at the Scottish Court of Queen Mary. He is reporting part of a conversation he had had with De Foix, the French Ambassador: 'From this purpose we fell in talk of the pastimes that were the Sunday before, when the Lord Robert, the Lord John and others ran at the ring, six against six, disguised and apparelled, the one half like women, the other half like strangers in strange masking garments. The Marquis [d'Elbœuf, the Queen's uncle] that day did very well; but the women, whose part the Lord Robert did sustain, won the Ring, The Queen herself beheld it, and as many others as listed.'

A few years later, when the Admirable Crichton was in Paris, we find him distinguishing himself as highly in the tilt yard as among the doctors of the University. Pennant, in his sketch of Crichton's life, quotes from Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty the account of the famous disputation when Crichton caused notices to be affixed to the gates of the Parisian colleges and schools, inviting all the most renowned doctors of the city to dispute with him at the College of Navarre in any art or science, and in any of twelve languages, on that day six weeks; 'and during all this time, instead of making a close application to his studies, he minded nothing but hunting, hawking, tilting, cards, dice, tennis, and other diversions of youth.' 'Yet on the day appointed he met with them in the College of Navarre, and acquit himself beyond expression in that dispute, which lasted from nine till six of the clock.' But still, after all this hard work, 'he was so little fatigued with that day's dispute that the very next day he went to the Louvre, where he had a match of tilting, an exercise in great request in those days; and in the presence of some princes of the Court of France, and a great many ladies, he carried away the ring fifteen times on end, and broke as many lances on the Saracen.' No wonder that 'ever after that he was called the Admirable Crichton!'

Echard, in his 'History of England,' says that Charles the First was 'so perfect in vaulting, riding the great horse, running at the ring, shooting with crossbows, muskets, and sometimes great guns, that if sovereignty had been the reward of excellence in those arts,

he would have acquired a new title to the crown, being accounted the most celebrated marksman and the most perfect manager of the great horse of any in the three kingdoms.' Gross flattery this probably was; but many other passages might be cited to prove the fondness of the age for this and similar pastimes, by which, Burton tells us, 'many gentlemen gallop quite out of their fortunes.'

Both the quintain—'common recreation of country folk,' and the ring—'disport of greater men,' according to the '*Anatomy of Melancholy*'—appear to have gone out with the Stuarts in England, though in Scotland traces of tilting at the ring are found now and then in notices of country fairs and gatherings during the last century. A curious instance of this, where the pastime was cultivated as a preventive to intemperance that should endear it to Sir Wilfrid Lawson, is given in Sir John Sinclair's '*Statistical Account of Scotland*, in 1798.' An old Perthshire society, the Fraternity of Chapmen, held their annual meeting for the election of their 'Lord,' or president, in the parish of Dunkeld. After the election the members dined together, and after dinner, the minister of the parish tells us, 'to prevent that intemperance to which social meetings in such situations are sometimes prone they spend the evening in some public competition of dexterity or skill. Of these, riding at the ring (an amusement of ancient and warlike origin) is the chief. Two perpendicular posts are erected on this occasion, with a cross beam, from which is suspended a small ring; the competitors are on horseback, each having a pointed rod in his hand, and he who at full gallop, passing betwixt the posts, carries away the ring on his rod gains the prize.'

In recent years running at the ring has again become popular, especially at 'military sports,' where the pastime, along with tent-pegging, its brother-sport from the East, cultivates quickness of eye and hand, and management of the charger among our cavalry, exactly as the old quintain and ring were designed to do among our ancestors eight centuries ago.

ROBERT MACGREGOR.

Spring's Gifts.

I.

SPRING hath her daily gifts most choice and meet,
 The smile of airy welcome on her face ;
 She plants her flowers in unexpected place,
 And sheds her promise richly at our feet.

But, ah ! her airy smile is all too fleet,
 And much she leaves unwritten of her grace,
 For these bald patches in the interspace
 Are alien to her wooing touches sweet.

And were the Spring indeed more perfect-drest
 In warmer colours and gradated hues,
 What then were left for Summer's sun and glow ?

Of Autumn's red, and breezy blue, what use ?
 Each season hath its own peculiar show,
 And each atones the failures of the rest.

II.

AND so in life : Man's spirit, ever prone
 To wander from the present, seeks elate
 On tiptoe for the still more perfect state,
 And vantage-point would make of royal throne

In nothing is perfection : all doth own
 The ' little rift ' that, widening, soon or late
 Will make the beauty that we contemplate
 But dust and ashes. Thus new seeds are sown :

And these the seeds of Charity's fair Spring,
 And seeds of Summer's warmth and golden glow,
 And Autumn's fruited wealth of calm and peace ;

And those the seeds of Winter's ivy show,
 And icy winds' destructive chastening,
 That each from each may draw most fond release.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

From the Chapel Roof.

BY HENRY W. LUCY.

ONE evening in the early spring of a year in the last quarter of the nineteenth century—it was, in short, Wednesday evening, March 12, 1879—a solitary pedestrian might have been observed walking rapidly down the main street of the ancient town of Windsor. Coming to the road that leads to the castle, he, after a moment's hesitation, took the turning, and walked on till he arrived at the entrance to the courtyard. Here he suddenly changed his attitude, thrust his billy-cock hat on the back of his head, put his hands in his pockets, and, assuming a slouching gait, attempted to walk past the sentry.

That wary soldier was, however, on the *qui vive*.

‘On the works,’ said the stranger in reply to the challenge; and without stopping to observe the effect of this explanation, he walked on across the quadrangle and entered the cloisters of the Chapel of St. George.

Five minutes later, two other men slouched into the gateway, and, being challenged, answered as before. Then came two others; and the sentry, musing on these matters, began to think that the work inside the castle must be costing a pretty penny when it required the supervision of so many persons. For these five men, who, being ‘on the works,’ had been passed in, were evidently not common labourers. ‘Probably foremen,’ the sentry thought as he watched the figures of the last two fade in the gloom of the cloisters.

The five men were evidently well acquainted with each other, and, joining within the cloisters, spoke to each other apparently in high glee at the success of some stratagem. There were other people about the cloisters, as, indeed, there seemed to be people everywhere within the precincts of the castle. Hammers were falling, planks were being carried hither and thither; and in the courtyard, lighted only by a fire which burned in an open grate in one corner, men were hurrying to and fro, giving the last touches to the preparation for the ceremonial of the morrow, when his Royal Highness Arthur William Patrick Albert, Duke of Connaught and Strathearne, Earl of Sussex, wearer of the order of the Black Eagle of Prussia, the Elephant of Denmark, and the Seraphim of Sweden, was to wed the daughter of the Red Prince of Prussia.

It was evident that the five strangers were chiefly anxious not to draw inconvenient attention upon themselves, and to prevent any suspicion of loitering.

They walked round the cloisters ostentatiously engaged in conversation. Workmen passed them, and thought they were officials of the castle. Officials of the castle passed them, and thought they belonged to the working party. So they walked about unchallenged and almost unseen in the semi-darkness of the cloisters. They were ordinary-looking men such as you might meet any day in the street. The one who had entered first, and who appeared to be the leader, was a man of ordinary inches and powerful build, though a tendency to corpulency somewhat detracted from his height. His face was one which at first glance was pleasant to look upon. It was fresh-coloured, with blue eyes, and an honest, open expression. He was the sort of man one would speak to in a railway carriage or on a lonely road, and think he had found a pleasant companion. A keen observer might, however, note, keeping his glance steadily fixed on those blue eyes, that sometimes an evil light came into them. They seemed to change colour, gleaming like the blue in steel, and with this all the expression of the face changed. Instead of the pleasant, kindly, honest look, there was a mask of hard, stony determination, capable of carrying out evil intent to the furthest end.

‘It will be a fine sight,’ said one of the figures.

‘Yes,’ replied another voice, ‘and there will be more looking on than they have provided seats for.’

Then the leader spoke in a voice which, like his face, was pleasant and honest at first, but seemed to change to a malignant tone before his speech was ended.

‘It will be fine,’ he said, ‘to see the Queen come up, and then there will be the King of the Belgians, and the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Edinburgh, and Lord Beaconsfield. What a roar would run through Europe, and how the world would be shaken even down to the Antipodes, if, say between the responses of the marriage service, five shots were to sound through the startled chapel, five flashes were to come as it were from mysterious holes in the roof, and five corpses were to lie around the marriage altar. The Queen, the King of the Belgians, the Prince of Wales, the Bridegroom, and Lord Beaconsfield. Ha! ha! ha!’

‘Hist,’ said one of the five, nudging the leader, ‘you will be heard, and then it will be all over with us.’

The caution seemed unnecessary. No one appeared to interrupt their tramp. But there seemed to go up from the cloisters, carried on the wild March air, a wail, which, passing over the chapel

roof, circled round the tower of Windsor and shook the folds of the royal standard. 'The Queen, the King of the Belgians, the Prince of Wales, the Bridegroom, and Lord Beaconsfield. Ha! ha! ha!'

In silence, or carrying on conversation in whispers, the five figures rapidly passed round the cloisters, as innocent men might walk, taking a little exercise before going to bed. Nine o'clock was striking from the church tower as the first man had entered the gate and passed the unsuspecting sentry. It was now gone half-past nine, and all around still sounded the fall of the hammers, the shuffling of feet, and the cries of the workmen. If anyone had been watching these five figures, they would have observed that there were now only four. One had disappeared as completely as if the ground beneath had yawned and swallowed him up. The four went pacing round, and presently there were only three. How the other two had disappeared no casual observer could have told. But if narrowly watched, it would have been discovered that on passing by a particular pillar in the cloisters one man of the three now remaining seemed to halt, and almost before one could cry he was gone. The other two walked on as before, taking no notice of this phenomenon, and on passing this precise spot the fourth man vanished as before, leaving the leader alone in the cloisters. He, without altering his pace, walked round as if his companions were still with him. On returning he halted at the place where they had disappeared. Looking back—not for any useful purpose, for it was so dark that he could not see five yards off, but as an instinctive habit of caution—he approached the pillar. Behind this, and enclosing the green which formed a quadrangle within the cloisters, was a fringe of high iron railings. One of these had been lifted out of the lower socket, and through the aperture the leader with some difficulty squeezed himself, and stood within the quadrangle.

Without any appearance of hurry he gently pressed back the rail till it stood once more in the socket and left no trace of the means of approach to the green. Turning to the right and keeping within the shadow of the cloisters he came to a corner on which the Chapel Royal abuts. Here four figures, standing stiff against the wall, as four corpses might stand, disclosed the mystery of the disappearance of his companions.

'Number off,' said the leader. 'One.'

'Two.'

'Three.'

'Four.'

'Five.'

'Up with the ladder.' He had stooped down and seized by

the topmost rung a ladder which lay with suspicious conveniency along the wall.

‘Now,’ said Number One, when the ladder was planted, ‘I will go up first. Number Two, put your hand on the ladder, and when you feel it shake, you come along. Numbers Three, Four, and Five will follow you.’

Number One mounted the ladder with an agility not to be expected from one of his massive build. Number Two, placing his hand on the ladder as directed, presently felt the expected signal and had mounted four or five steps when he was struck on the head and precipitated to the ground.

‘Hallo!’ said a familiar voice, as Number One reappeared, just saving himself from falling after planting his foot on Number Two’s head. ‘You are in too great a hurry. I find the ladder is too short. It is at least four feet from the battlements. The only thing to be done is to stand on the top rung, clutch hold of the battlements, and haul yourself up. I will do this, and when you feel me free of the ladder, Number Two, come on.’

Number One went lightly up the ladder again, and reaching up from the top grasped the stone battlements and by main force drew his bulky form clear up and tumbled over into the gutter on the other side of the battlement. Number Two followed, and the rest in due order, each performing with success a feat which, difficult at any time, was peculiarly dangerous in the darkness of the night.

Just as Number Five had pulled himself over, the ladder was shaken from below, and a voice came up from the darkness with an interrogating

‘Hallo?’

‘Hallo?’ said Number One, equal to this as, apparently, to any emergency.

‘What are you up to?’ said the voice from below.

‘We are going to strike the derrick,’ said Number One, whose quick eye had noticed, standing out from the shadow of the battlement, a derrick or pole which had been used by the masons for hauling up materials.

‘All right,’ said the voice, and the owner walked off with noiseless footfall across the smooth shaven lawn.

Led by Number One, and keeping well within the shadow of the battlement, the little party having first hauled up the ladder, strode stealthily along the gutter of the roof towards the spiral staircase, which here opened on to the roof by means of a door. Honest men having any business in this part of the chapel would have gone to the Dean, asked for the keys, unlocked the door of

the staircase in the courtyard, and quietly and decently walked up. Our five friends, for reasons of their own, found it necessary to approach the staircase by the means here described. They found the door open, and were presently toiling their way up the winding staircase to the higher roof. On to this a door gave, and here, as before, there was a safe promenade behind the battlements.

The upper or main roof of St. George's Chapel, as everyone knows, has a pretty sharply defined apex. Number One, after a few whispered instructions to his companions, began climbing up the roof on his hands and knees, an undertaking in which he found considerable assistance from the hooks let into the lead, after the manner of steps, for the use of the plumbers. On reaching the top the five crawled down on the other side, following close upon the steps of their leader. Arrived at the bottom the party made direct for the door leading to the spiral staircase on the other side of the chapel, corresponding with the one by which they had ascended. This door also was open, and Number Two, Three, and Four safely passed in. Number Five was about to enter when, looking back at the perilous pathway they had traversed, he saw, clear out against the sky, the figure of a man crossing the apex of the roof. Seizing Number One by the arm, he pointed to the figure, which was just emerging from the sky line and was evidently coming down on their trail.

'Two, Three, and Four have passed in,' said Number One. 'We number up to five, and that is not one of our party.'

With a swift motion his hand went to his belt. The evil light flashed in his eyes, the honest red on his cheeks faded, and the man, who was evidently crawling down the roof, would not have liked to have seen the stony, set expression of the face that looked up at him. He was coming down backwards on his hands and knees, and looked in the shifting lights like one of the griffins let loose from the battlements. But he was too evidently a man, and how long he would be a living man after he touched the parapet and stood face to face with Number One was a calculation not pleasant to undertake.

'Let us get into the staircase, and shut the door,' said Number Five. 'Then he can do or say what he pleases.'

Suiting the action to the word, he made towards the staircase, and was followed by Number One, whose eye seemed to linger regretfully on the unconscious man coming slowly down the roof. Inside the staircase they closed the door, sent home the bolt, and were safe.

Passing down the staircase—Number One always leading with an absence of irresolution which testified either to his practical

knowledge of the locality or to his having made a careful study of it from plans—they reached a door opening on the right apparently into some room. This they passed, and, coming to a similar door below, opened it and entered.

Here was a strange sight. The room was about eighteen feet wide by forty long. It is of course well known to all who have business in connection with the castle, though it had probably never before been entered by the common people who live outside royal castles. There is no reason why I should not particularise it. It is understood to have been originally designed as a sort of retiring-room or vestry for the officiating minister of the chapel. Perhaps it has not thus been used for more than a hundred years, and has in the mean time locally obtained the significant appellation of ‘Hell.’ It looks right out on the courtyard through windows of quarried glass set in the thick walls of the tower.

The party of five purposing to make a night of it here, and being evidently not insensible to creature comforts, had been faced by the difficulty of the presence of these windows. They could not, or at least had no intention to, pass the night without fire or light. The deliberate and complete nature of their preparations, and the suspicion of confederates within the castle, were indicated by the fact that a portion of this room had been enclosed within double canvas walls. These barring the approach to the windows and being roofed across formed a sort of den within which a coke fire boldly burned in an old and rusty grate.

Coming out of the pitch darkness of the spiral staircase this fire-lighted room seemed a hall of dazzling light. It at least fully disclosed the furniture of the place. In the middle of the room was a plank laid across two trestles. Underneath was a box some four feet long by two broad. Two other boxes or tool chests stood in other parts of the room, and lastly there was an open box containing a supply of coke.

On entering, Number One seized the box under the plank, and opening it, produced a flat candlestick and a supply of tallow candles. Placing one of these in the stick he lit it, and by its assistance rifled the box. First of all he brought out half a boiled ham. Then two loaves, a stone jar containing some liquid, one or two bottles, a supply of tumblers, spoons, knives and forks, and a kettle. The last was filled from a small barrel which one of the five rooted out from a corner of the room, and was then placed on the fire. The viands were spread on the plank, and without more ado the party fell to eating and drinking, ‘for,’ as Number Five observed, ‘to-morrow we die.’

‘Someone will,’ Number One said gruffly. ‘Pass the pickles.’

The men lingered over their supper as if they did not particularly care to be left alone with their thoughts. The repast concluded, they cleared away the débris and the crockery, and Number Three produced a pack of cards. Nobody seemed inclined to play except Number Four, who admitted an acquaintance with cribbage. So these two sat down at the board over the trestles and began to play. Two and Five, lighting their pipes, sat on one of the boxes by the wall, and Number One, seated on the box containing the coke, stared steadily into the fire and smoked furiously. The two men on the box chatted in low tones and with increasing evidence of drowsiness, which presently resolved itself into a snore. Number One still sat staring into the fire and smoking, but the puffs of smoke had grown more fitful. Presently his head sank on his chest, the pipe dropped out of his hand, and he slept, starting from time to time as through the chamber there sounded the recurring and sleepy cry from the players at the table :

‘Fifteen two ; fifteen four ; and one for his nob !’

There was a singular air of peace, and even of rough comfort, about this room, with the fire burning steadily in the grate, the two men sleeping on the trunk, the recumbent figure on the coke-box, and the two players seated at the plank on trestles, the candle-light casting gigantic shadows on the white canvas walls. Rembrandt might have sketched it ; but no one seeing the picture would have thought of writing under, by way of legend, the fearsome name which the room had oddly acquired. It looked too homely and drowsily peaceful for such a suggestion.

Day was already far advanced, and everyone was awake except the two players, who were discovered with their arms stretched out on the table, and were ruthlessly roused by their comrades. Number One was bustling about the room, blaming everybody but himself for letting the fire out. Number Five was on his hands and knees puffing away at the deadened coke. No fire, no coffee ; and the necessity for stimulant of some sort in view of the day’s work was keenly felt. Number One, rooting among the crockery and wreck of last night’s supper, came upon a parcel of sugar. Taking two or three lumps, he deftly inserted them where the coke still smouldered, and presently the fire was burning, the kettle was simmering, and breakfast became something more than a possibility. They made a hasty but abundant meal and began to remove all trace of their occupancy of the chamber. Everything was stowed away in the tool chests about the room, the plank was taken off the trestles and laid along the wall. Then Number One produced from one of his pockets a small case, about eight inches long and three broad. It looked in the half-light of the shaded room something

like the case of an opera glass. His example was followed by his comrades, and presently there sounded in succession five clicks, not loud enough for the snap of a pistol, but uncommonly sharp and distinct.

‘All right?’ said Number One, carefully placing the instrument in his breast pocket.

‘All right,’ said the rest in chorus, and without another word they filed out after Number One.

Leading the way, he reached the staircase and began to ascend till he stepped out on the upper roof of the chapel. It was now eleven o’clock, and though they were above any height at which they might be overlooked, it was necessary to observe precaution lest they might be seen from below or from the town. They crept cautiously along, walking in the gutter of the roof and protected on the right hand by the battlements. Thus they advanced till they came to the gable end. Here was another door which seemed to open into darkness. Number One, who had never hesitated in his movements, entered, and was followed by his four confederates. They stood for a moment till their eyes grew accustomed to semi-darkness. The roof of the room in which they now found themselves was lofty and composed of bare beams. The floor seemed to be a series of pitfalls. Pathways composed of great beams ran across it, and on these a man might walk, though on either side were cavities, how deep could not be told in the shimmering light that came through the open door. After a while the strangers discerned through the gloom other lights, apparently coming through the floor.

Number One going down on his hands and knees carefully traversed the beam, followed by his companions. A few feet on, this beam was crossed by another beam, this again by others. The party breaking up as it were at cross roads, each took his own path, crawling slowly over dust that lay fully an inch thick, and so fine as to be almost impalpable to the touch. Each man seemed to make his way for one of the rays of light that pierced the floor, and bending his head till it touched the floor looked down.

‘I’m a bit mixed,’ said Number One, after intently gazing for a moment through the aperture. ‘Here’s the Herald right under me with the toes of his boots turned up to his knees. I think the altar must be farther up. Bear away with your backs to the light of the door.’

Suddenly the blare of trumpets filled the darkened chamber. The burst of music seemed to spring up from beneath the adventurers, and Number Three, starting at the sudden sound, fell off the beam, and with a shriek rolled away into black space.

'He's only fallen into one of the crevices,' said Number One; 'give him a hand up.' And Number Three, sneezing violently, was drawn up out of the dust-hole.

'Ah, here we are. Here's right over the altar. A hole apiece; and, Number Three, mind you don't drop any dust down. Give yourself a good shaking before you stoop.'

Hurriedly gathering in the direction whence the voice came, the five figures stooped and bent their heads down till again they touched the floor.

'Splendid!'

Then rising on their knees each man put his hand into his breast pocket, and amid the thick gloom through which the bright March morning outside vainly strove to thrust shafts of light, these five figures could be plainly seen each to take out an instrument similar to that which the leader of the band had examined when in the room below. The triumphant blare of the trumpets had died away, and the air was tremulous with the solemn tones of the organ breaking into the stirring strains of the march from 'Athalie.' But though the music seemed to shake the rafters with melodious thunder, it could not deaden the sound of the five distinct 'clicks!' which followed upon a gesture by which each of the five figures seemed to fix a gleaming barrel in the aperture in the floor and return to his breast pocket the case which had held it. Once more they bent down and seemed intently to watch for a signal.

It was a rare sight upon which these greedy eyes looked down. St. George's Chapel was crowded with a congregation of fair women and brave men. Orders, jewels, and bright eyes flashed everywhere in the glad sunlight. All the colours of the rainbow had been gathered up and strewn about to make fair dresses for fairer forms. The Royalty, rank, and beauty of the greatest nation in the world were enclosed within the four walls of this little chapel, whose ornate roof seen from below gave no hint of possibilities of ambush. The Queen sat by the altar, the Koh-i-noor pendent from her neck. Near her chair stood the Prince of Wales and the King of the Belgians. Not far off, stalled as Knight of the Garter, was the courtier Premier with lugubrious look that belied his errand. It was the critical moment of the imposing ceremony. The trumpets had forgotten to sound. The organ was stilled. The Bride and Bridegroom stood hand in hand and face to face at the steps of the Altar, and through the hushed chapel there sounded the still voice of the Archbishop pronouncing familiar words, echoed in a manly tone by the Bridegroom. In the gloomy chamber above, the five

figures lay prone and motionless on the floor, each at an aperture covering a particular member of the company at the altar steps.

Through the oppressive silence, the tortured ear and the overwrought brain might well fancy they heard the wail that last night circled round the town of Windsor and shook the folds of the Royal Standard. 'The Queen, the King of the Belgians, the Prince of Wales, the Bridegroom, and Lord Beaconsfield. Ha! Ha! Ha!'

Would the silence never be broken? It seemed an age since the bridegroom had first held out his hand and taken within it the ungloved fingers of the bride. The air in the chamber seemed to grow thicker. The silky dust that lay thick around stirred strangely as if touched by ghostly breath.

Something else was moving.

It was Number One, who, gathering himself up, rested on his knees, and with a preliminary sound like the smacking of lips observed:

'Well, I only wish Mrs. Segg was here. When I told her that I was going to climb over roofs and spend a night on bare boards just to see the Duke of Connaught married, she said in her simple straightforward way, "Segg, you're daft." If she'd only been here and seen the lovely dresses and the Bride's train stretched out like a peacock's tail, and if she'd heard her say, "I will," in a timid though audible voice, she wouldn't have minded the ladders nor yet the ham, which to my mind was a trifle unboiled, though the way old Number Three tucked into it was a caution.'

And Number One, taking his opera glass out of the aperture, put it back in the case, snapping the latter with a spiteful 'click!' as he thought of how he would vex the soul of Mrs. Segg with the description of glories on which her eye had not looked.

An Unrequited Attachment.

BY JAMES PAYN.

THE affinities between us are not always reciprocal. Just as love is sometimes 'all on one side,' so the attraction that draws one man to another is occasionally altogether wanting in the individual so drawn. A gravitates to B, and sticks there; but B for the life of him can't tell why. He has not the brutality to say, 'Go away; I have nothing for you, my good man. You may think I have, but I haven't.' It is scarcely in human nature to reject the hand of friendship, but it is certainly true that one often does not know what to do with it. We take it in our own, and there it lies. One feels no inclination to return its pressure, and yet one does not like to drop it. It is very natural, of course, that nice people should be fond of us; also good people, and in fact everybody worth knowing. Beyond that, however, we don't wish admiration to go. And yet now and then it does so.

Muggins Q.C., for example, has long entertained for me a regard that is most embarrassing. It is not on account of any similarity of opinion, for we differ on all points. It is not my faith, for I am orthodox; while he, so far as I have been able to discover, believes in Muggins only. It is not my works, for he never reads anything but law books. In a modest way, and when only one or two persons at most are present, I am fond of a quiet joke; but Muggins hates jokes, although with a somewhat ignorant malevolence, for I am sure he has never seen one. The Laureate, it is true, has given some sort of explanation for the friendship of dissimilar natures—'as his unlikeness fitted mine,' is, I think, his phrase—but the unlikeness of myself and Muggins does not fit at all. On the knifeboard of my 'twopenny' 'bus, I pass the great lawyer trotting on his cob to Lincoln's Inn every morning, and tremble lest recognition should take place on his part; not that I am ashamed of riding on an omnibus, or that Muggins would be ashamed of me. For, to do him justice, he is not that kind of idiot at all; but I know that he would patronise the 'bus and the people on it (out of regard for me) to that extent that they would rise up (if they were men) and throw me off the knifeboard.

He is such an all-pervading, all-important personage as the human mind cannot grapple with, but must either at once submit to or resent with vehemence. I wish to goodness I had resented

him, but I succumbed. I met him first at a dull dinner-party—one of those great deserts without an oasis in the shape of an intelligent man or a pretty woman, in which one sometimes finds oneself, through want of caution, or from good nature, or in punishment for some offence committed by one's ancestors. As a refuge from 'Art' and the 'Rhodope Massacres,' both of which subjects demanded replies, I nestled under Muggins's wing, who was restating a right of way case, in which he had been engaged in court that morning, and only required a listener. I could think my own thoughts while he pounded on in his fine forensic style, and was comparatively content. The others knew him and I did not, and, dull as they were, they refused to listen to him. It was not till he observed, 'I perceive you are a man of sense,' that I began to understand my danger, and remembered how the great boa of the serpent tribe lubricates his victim before he swallows him.

It was Muggins Q.C.'s habit (as I have now good reason to know) to repeat to any private ear he could capture in the evening the arguments he had addressed to 'My Lord' in the course of the day. Five thousand a-year is what 'My Lord' gets for listening to them, and nobody can say he is overpaid; but I of course get nothing from that right of way. He called it 'right o' way' (from familiarity with the subject), and I caught myself murmuring 'right o' way. Oh, if I could only get right away,' which flattered him, I believe. He thought I was attempting to commit his argument to memory. When he had quite done, he asked me, with much warmth of manner, where I lived, to which I replied, 'Holloway.' I didn't live there, but I felt sure that *he* didn't, and that it would be a safe thing to say. He replied very graciously that he was sorry we did not dwell on the same side of the Park, but that distance was of no consequence in London. I don't believe it is of any consequence anywhere when Muggins Q.C. has once taken a fancy to one. If I fled to Greenwich or Richmond he would amble up to my door on his cob, or emerge at it from his little brougham (into which he exactly fits), to repeat his legal arguments of the morning. Nothing but death, I feel, will ever release me from the toils of Muggins's friendship; and from the tables of annuities I calculate he will live ten years longer at the very least, when I may regain my liberty indeed, but shall have lost the youth which would have enabled me to enjoy it.

A rude person would of course find the means of breaking with such a tormentor, but I am unfortunately incapable of a rudeness. Muggins Q.C., who is good temper itself, believes his attachment to be reciprocated, and how am I to undeceive him? I venture

to think that no story of the affections, ancient or modern, has ever described them to be more hopelessly misplaced ; but the elements of poetry and romance are wanting in my case to render it pathetic, and I cannot conceal from myself that among ill-natured people my position has excited some ridicule. Muggins Q.C. has endeavoured to attach himself to many persons, all of them of eminence and notoriety, which I try to think ought to be some sort of comfort or compliment to me ; but they have eluded him with a dexterity I envy beyond measure, but to which I cannot attain.

A triple example of this has just been brought under my notice. For a month and more Muggins Q.C. has had a topic of conversation other than his own flights of legal eloquence, Mrs. Muggins having rather unexpectedly, or at all events after an unusually long delay, presented him with a son and heir. As the learned counsel tells me that 'he is opposed to making eldest sons on principle,' I conclude there will be no more of these infants, since if there were, and they were boys, this would be an eldest son. (Muggins Q.C. says that if I have a fault it is the want of a logical mind, but I think I have worked that out satisfactorily). However, some weeks after the arrival of this prodigy, I received the following letter :

My dear Friend,—Augustus George is to be christened on Thursday next, and we count upon your presence at the midday banquet. If a boy could have three godfathers you should be one ; but, as it is, his spiritual responsibilities have been undertaken by older but not more valued friends. The Lord High Chancellor of England, and Jones, the leader-writer of the 'Intelligencer,' volunteered for that post on the very afternoon of the arrival of Augustus George. They will both, of course, be with us on the auspicious morning. The Bishop of Mugginton (no relation of mine, though our names are somewhat similar, and our armorial bearings identical) has insisted on performing the ceremony. With the addition of yourself, we shall therefore be rather a distinguished little party. I dare say you noticed my arguments in the 'Intelligencer' this morning in the great case of *Gimlet v Bradawl*, which you will have regretted to see were reported with shameful brevity in the 'Times.'

Yours very faithfully,

JONATHAN MUGGINS Q.C.

This invitation disturbed me exceedingly, for, next to a funeral, and perhaps a wedding, there is nothing I dislike more cordially than a christening party. In this case, too, there would be a certain flavour of hypocrisy about it, since Muggins Q.C., who, as I have said, only believes in himself, was necessarily incredulous of any advantage to be derived from godfathers, except spoons and mugs ; and yet he would make a speech, I knew (since a Bishop *was to be present*), calculated to move the heart of the infidel, and

at all events to cast him before any jury in very serious damages. It was clear to me, however, that I had to go. It was only with much misgiving, and, as it were, with a dead lift of all my energies, that I dared to make excuse in the case of an ordinary invitation to Muggins's table ; and the present occasion was of course a supreme one. I therefore bought a second-hand spoon and fork, as my contribution to Augustus George's effects, and, placing it in a brand-new case, forwarded it to his address with a written promise to appear in person on the day appointed ; and that promise I performed.

On Sunday, of course, it is always a pleasure as well as a duty to go to church ; but on a week-day, and in winter, it is not so cheerful. Even the most fashionable places of worship strike you then as rather cold, and a font (however much it may look like it) is not the kind of place to warm your hands at. Muggins Q.C., naturally was there in person, looking as if he was the proprietor, not only of the infant, but of the whole establishment, and Mrs. Muggins, and the monthly nurse. But of the Lord High Chancellor and of the famous leader-writer of the 'Intelligencer' I saw nothing. Moreover, if the officiating minister was a Bishop, he was a very young one, and was dressed—well, I don't know much about ecclesiastical garments, but I really saw no difference between him and the curate of the parish. Nor, indeed, was there any. Muggins whispered to me that his Lordship had been prevented at the last moment from coming to perform the interesting ceremony by an attack of the measles. The notion of a Bishop with the measles so completely captivated my attention that it was only with the greatest difficulty I could be made to understand that I was undertaking, by deputy, the office of sponsor. Twice did the curate inquire, 'Who names this child?' before I gathered that he was addressing my humble self ; and I am afraid it was only Muggins's whisper, 'Why the deuce don't you name the child?' which brought me at last to a sense of my situation. Not only did the Lord High Chancellor and the scarcely less distinguished journalist absent themselves from the church, but they were not at the breakfast either. No one was there at all, besides the host and hostess and myself, except the monthly nurse, who stood with the infant at the sideboard, and was addressed by Muggins (on the occasion of handing her a glass of port wine) with a pomposity and prolixity that would have done honour to the judges in banco.

When she was at last permitted to depart, we sat down to a most excellent repast, the hilarity of which was somewhat marred by the three vacant seats. I made some feeling allusion to them,

but Muggins put the remark aside with a wave of his hand which I thought expressed a regret too deep for words; but I was mistaken. When refreshed by food and wine, he rose from his chair, and, with one hand in his bosom (how well I knew that oratorical attitude!), he proceeded to explain the absence of his guests.

His venerable friend (if he would allow him to call him so) the Lord Bishop of Mugginton was suffering, he said, from domestic affliction. One of his children had that morning broken out in a rash, and under the circumstances, and in the possible contingency of measles, his Lordship, with that forethought for others which always distinguished him, had deprived himself of the satisfaction of admitting Augustus George into the fold of the Church, 'lest his presence should be a source of contagion.' 'My Lord Bishop,' concluded Muggins in a voice broken by emotion, which he can affect at any time before any jury (I think by putting his tongue in his cheek), 'my Lord Bishop has sent my child Augustus George—his blessing.'

Muggins had finished, and I was stamping delicately on the floor to express my appreciation of the Bishop's generosity, when, to my horror, off he started again.

'My friend the Lord High Chancellor of England had promised, as you know, to shed by his presence this morning a lustre upon the head of Augustus George; "but unfortunately," he writes, "I received last night a summons to attend Her Majesty at Windsor Castle, which must needs deprive me of that great pleasure."

'The Lord Chancellor sends—it is a most characteristic and noteworthy gift, though one which years alone will enable Augustus George duly to appreciate—a copy of his own admirable work on Property Law—the cheap edition.'

Here Muggins paused again, and once more thinking he was going to sit down, I softly shuffled my feet together; any stronger mark of appreciation, I felt, was uncalled for. A Bishop's blessing might be beyond price—there were no means of estimating it; but the exact cost of the legal work just spoken of I happened to know. It was one shilling and eightpence.

'We have been deprived of another guest this morning,' recommenced Muggins Q.C. in a voice so hushed and solemn that I thought Jones must be dead. 'A great journalist was to have honoured by his personal presence that ceremony which it will be his duty, and, as I venture to think, a pleasing one, to record; it will be mentioned in the columns of that widely circulated and extensively advertised newspaper, the "Intelligencer," no doubt; and if it is possible will be alluded to in a leading article. "If it can be done," writes Jones, in a letter that does honour to the human

heart, and is also, perhaps, one of the finest specimens of epistolary style in the language, "if it *can* be done it *shall* be done." The cause of his absence is a sudden change in the policy of his journal, which has compelled him to give his immediate and undivided attention to all the arguments that have been advanced on the other side, and which he has heretofore disregarded. He goes on to say that he looks upon the relation of godchild and godfather as a link of virgin gold—a tie far too solemn and too sacred to be associated (in a reverent mind) with mugs and spoons, for which reason he has abstained upon principle from sending any christening present to Augustus George. That, to my mind, is very touching,' concluded Muggins, wiping his gold spectacles, 'and shows a fine public spirit.'

And I have no doubt that he believed it. For as regards himself, and all that belongs to him, Muggins Q.C. has the simplicity of a child. He believes that he is not only the most learned of all learned counsel (which, for aught I know, he may be), but the most attractive (to both sexes) of all human beings. He cannot conceive that anyone (being in his right mind) can wish to avoid him, or find anything but edification and delight in the reproduction of his forensic eloquence. He is the most perfectly content and self-satisfied of mortals, and therefore one of the happiest of them. 'I may have my faults,' he said, with a bland smile, as he took my hand with effusion upon Christmas Day; 'it is possible: "we do not know ourselves," says the Greek poet; but no one, my dear fellow, can ever accuse me of not sticking to my friends.'

That, alas, is very true. I felt it in my bones when he said it. In this world I shall never get quit of Muggins Q.C., I know. In the other—I wish Muggins no harm, and of course I wish myself no harm—but in the other, I do hope some arrangement may be effected (without, of course, hurting his feelings) by which Muggins Q.C. and I may be separated for evermore.

Peter the Great.

SEVERAL of the thrones of Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century were occupied by men of unusual force, freshness, and uniqueness of character. Charles XII., Frederick William, and Peter the Great were every inch of them real and not merely titular kings, and announced the existence of their several empires to the older sovereignties, who hitherto had treated them with a contemptuous and condescending toleration, with an emphasis that compelled attention. If there was little of the trappings of a king about them, there was in them abundance of that fire and force which goes to the building up and consolidation of empires, and without which the tinsel and spangle, the gold lace, the pompous ceremonial, the mock dignity, are rather ludicrous than solemnising. They were kings though they could not play at kings. Their royal progresses were not empty melodramatic or scenic posturings before the people; a practical purpose ever lay at the root of them. They did not disdain to visit the courts of justice, hear complaints, witness the administration of righteousness by their representatives and deputies, and inquire carefully into the habits and industries of the districts through which they passed. I do not suppose that these monarchs ever wasted a moment in devising methods and means to foster the sentiment of loyalty; and certainly they gave more care to the sacred duty of furthering and planning the development of their country, and the happiness and prosperity of their subjects, than the consolidation of their thrones and the establishment of their dynasties. They must have seemed wild sports and freaks of nature, grotesque enigmas and phenomena, in the eyes of their crowned brethren whose ideal of the life-work of a king was to be and look solemn, pompous, self-conscious and vacant on occasions of public pageantry; and to be considerate of personal amusement and gratification when the solemn hour was past—a mere ornamental figure-head held up above the crowd to be cheered at, and having no other function in society to fill; or if any kind of activity is desirable in such exalted beings, rather that which goes to make them Founders of a Family than Fathers of a People.

Especially is this true of Frederick William and Peter, and of Peter, perhaps, more than of his brother of Prussia. The force that was in the Swedish hero showed itself in the line of the

soldier, and not in that of the reformer and statesman; but the genius of true kingship was in him, and, had circumstances been more propitious, would have made for itself an outlet in the nobler direction. A man's development is determined by the element around him. It is not our purpose to draw any contrast between the relative worth of the life-work of these three heroes, but rather to try to realise to ourselves a picture of one of them, to walk round and round him, and learn what manner of man he was, and stamp on our imagination a conception of his modes of living, of thinking, and of looking at things; his manners, habits, tastes, and ambitions; his bearing in, and influence on, that strange Russian society into which he had been born. Not being historians, either philosophical or matter-of-fact; nor yet Russian subjects, anxious about the origin and continuance of Russian greatness, Peter the man is far more profoundly interesting to us than Peter the King, the Captain, and Reformer. There is a deep universal human interest about him as there is in every man who lives and shapes his life by the spirit within him, not wholly by the conventionalities and approved routines and views of the society in which Fate has placed him; and, as long as it holds true that the proper study of mankind is man, so long will character in its wider, and not in its local and special aspects—in its human, not in its national or sectarian developments, have a peculiar fascination for men, and enable us to grasp and hold the sublime doctrine of the indestructible brotherhood of man in spite of the sects, breeds, and creeds into which the race has been split.

Well, then, when we stand a little back from our hero and take a glance at him, the thing that will chiefly strike us is the heterogeneousness of the elements of which he was mixed, the contradictoriness of the qualities of which the tissue of his being was woven. He was a bundle of contradictions; in nearly equal parts hero and churl, social regenerator and sot; lawless tyrant and beneficent legislator. He was born, bred, and died a barbarian; yet he was a powerful civilising energy in Russian life. He used sadly and self-reproachingly to complain that though he could reform his people he could not reform himself. He was fierce, explosive, even blood-thirsty; yet there was a good body of solid and even loveable manhood in him; a cruel tyrant, yet a scent of justice can always be suspected in his wildest outbreaks of vengeance; and there were tears in him for the sorrow-stricken, and sympathy and ready help for the widow and the orphan. It is doubtful if he ever read a book, yet he founded the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, and even

attempted to introduce the Italian Opera. His temper was cruel and irascible, yet a meek and patient defiance of it, based on reason and right, becalmed it in a moment and brought it under the control of his better mind. He had from his birth, and far on into his riper years, a nervous dread of water, yet he made himself a great sea-captain and Russia a great maritime power; and, in spite of his reckless, perverse, impatient spirit, schooled himself to learn the art of war in the bitter school of defeat and disaster, and taught it at last to his tutors and conquerors.

I cannot introduce the story of Peter's birth better than by giving an account of the manner in which Russian kings and nobles selected their brides, a custom which Peter afterwards abolished, and which looks like a survival from the times of Ahasuerus and Esther; it probably was so, for the Russians were of Oriental or Tartar descent—'Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar'—and 'Czar' is a title borrowed from that held by the petty chiefs descended from Genghis Khan. A marriage-market of all the young ladies willing to become candidates for the vacancy was held in a room set apart or hired for the purpose. The aspirant to matrimony made his round, winding and interwinding among the applicants, who spared no thought, expense, or toil, in spreading out their charms to the best advantage; and after careful inspection and balancing of the rival claims, he selected the lady whose grace and beauty most fascinated his heart, and eye, and fancy. Natalia Nariskin, Peter's mother, was chosen to be the second wife of the Czar Alexis in this manner out of some fifty or sixty young ladies of breeding and beauty who all competed for the Czar's vacant heart and throne. In her case, however, the impromptu character of the selection was a farce got up to pacify and deceive the higher nobility, in whose ranks the parents of the young lady were not enrolled. The Czar had met Natalia at the house of one of his ministers, and his heart had been taken captive on the spot. A few days afterwards he returned and asked her hand in marriage, to the great alarm of his minister, who saw at once that the powerful nobles would regard the marriage as the result of an intrigue. By the minister's advice the Czar resolved to follow the popular custom, and ordered the daughters of the nobility to present themselves before him. It was arranged that Natalia should appear among them, and that the Czar's choice of her should have a quite impromptu look. The fruit of this marriage, celebrated in Moscow in 1670, was one son and one daughter. On his return from his wanderings through Europe to learn civilisation Peter abolished this curious custom. Indeed, his achievements as a social reformer are not his least

claims to greatness, accomplished as they were in the face of great opposition on the part of the whole nation, both priests and peasants, nobles and serfs, anyone of these classes being quite as ignorant, prejudiced, and barbarous as the others. He set himself to provide opportunities and occasions on which the youth of both sexes should mix freely and openly on terms of social equality. Not only did he throw his own palaces open to all married and unmarried persons who were willing to come and see and be seen, but with a wise and healthy despotism he compelled his nobles to do so likewise. He even issued rules and regulations according to which these 'at homes' were to be conducted. What a strange society must that have been where such decrees as the following were thought dangerous and revolutionary:—The host must hang out a poster inviting all and sundry who came under the following categories:—Noblemen, officers of state, army and navy, merchants and shipbuilders, with their wives and children: no assembly was to begin before five or be prolonged after ten: the host must provide the requisite food, drink, and amusements, chairs, candles, and cards; but the guests were to help themselves. Everyone was to be free to come and go as he liked without the formalities of welcome and leave-taking. Any person making himself disagreeable was to be punished by being compelled to drink a bottle of wine out of a goblet to be called the 'greateagle.' It must be confessed that these gatherings were often boisterous and unruly; but the Czar's efforts to Europeanise his semi-Tartar subjects could not be expected to have a triumphant issue all at once, nor could it be expected that the graceful courtesies and refinements of Paris would in a moment become indigenous in St. Petersburg. What though the gentlemen and even the ladies got drunk and quarrelsome and fought, and some thirsty and unquenchable souls planned strife in order to qualify for the 'great eagle'? Rome was not built in a day, and the building up of a new moral order in society is a task more difficult and toilsome, inasmuch as tempers are not so tractable as bricks. It was the beginning of a free and friendly intercourse; and, then, do not most Northern nations—witness the Scotch—require the aid of that mighty solvent, alcohol, to thaw their reserve and make them loving, social, and communicative? There was a certain amount of chivalry, moreover, developed in Russian society by means of this drunkenness: those who were less drunk helped to stand, and aided home-wards, those who were more drunk than they.

It was a sore trial to Peter to persuade his subjects to dispense with the flowing beard and flowing garb of the Tartar and adopt the shaven chin, tight trousers, and cleansed skin of the European.

Even with his army he had considerable difficulty in effecting these social reforms on account of the inherited and deeply-rooted belief in the sanctity of the beard and the divineness of dirt. The tug of war came, however, when he tried to force these atheistic innovations on the body of the people. He legislated that citizens of all ranks should curtail their coat-tails and cut down their beards, which were simply a cover and hiding-place for unclean animals; but sold indulgences on payment of a fine of one hundred roubles by the wealthier classes; and by the poorer ones, such as the priests and serfs, a fine of a copeck every time they passed the gate of a city. A copper coin, with a figure of a nose, mouth, and chin concealed in a tangled brushwood of hair, was handed to the taxpayer by the toll-keeper at the gate. European habits and customs were hateful to the people. Hitherto, indeed, the Russians had spoken of all other nations as the infidels, with whom it was a heinous sin to associate. Peter not only expunged this sin from the national creed and the statute-book, but even ordered the young nobles to betake themselves and their wives to the capitals and courts of Europe, to graduate in civilisation, and qualify themselves to be refining elements in Russian society on their return. The Czar anticipated reforms but lately introduced into England when he made gambling and games of chance illegal, professional mendicancy a crime, and issued sanitary and police regulations. Ridicule was his favourite weapon in bringing any custom of which he disapproved into public disrepute; and many a one did he laugh out of existence with grim, lumbering, elephantine humour. The priests looked with sour visages on all his reforms, and indeed the sympathy of the people was rather with them than with him. The following was the device he adopted to reinstate himself in public favour and turn the laugh against the clergy, who had been advancing what are now called Ultramontane claims. His object in this story was to poke fun at the office of Patriarch, which the priests and people desired, against Peter's wish, to have revived. He resolved to create his clown, who was in his eighty-fourth year, a kind of mock patriarch. It was determined to marry this motley, and a strapping widow of thirty was chosen as his bride. Four poor stutterers, who took a quarter of an hour to get their tongues round each word, were victimised by being sent round to invite the guests, a deep draught of brandy having previously been administered to promote their fluency of utterance. Four fellows with tremendous physical exaggerations, fat, inflated, and clumsy, were appointed to run as heralds and footmen; their movements, also, being made erratic by drink. A few helpless paralytics and lamesters were deputed to play the part of

bridesmen and waiters. The open carriage in which the young couple made their glorious procession to church, amid drums beating, banners flying, discordant instruments playing, was dragged by four roaring and frightened bears, amid the uncontrollable laughter of the populace. To crown all, the marriage between this Patriarch of the Church and this poor victimised widow was celebrated by a toothless and wrinkled centenarian priest, deaf and blind, for whom the aid of a prompter had to be provided. On such a grand scale of hospitality was this state marriage conducted that there was hardly a sober person to be found in the whole city of Moscow; and the Czar brought it to a climax by giving an entertainment at the senate house, where each guest was forced, probably under the threat of Siberia, to quaff the contents of the 'double-eagle.' Again and again was this heavy horse-play repeated, till the office of patriarch became associated with ridicule in the minds of the populace for ever. And what kind of society must that have been where such a scene as the following could be looked on as proper? Previous to the Czar's ordinance by which mixed assemblies became compulsory, the ladies and gentlemen met in separate rooms. At one of the grand dinners given by the Czar, a huge pie was placed in the centre of the gentlemen's table, out of which, when the startled carver broke the crust, a beautiful dwarf lady, *in puris naturalibus*, all except a head-dress, stepped, proposed in a set speech and drank in a glass of wine the health of the company, and then retired into her snug retreat and was carried from the table. A man dwarf was substituted at the ladies' table. Did not Peter say he could reform his people, but not himself? A dinner-party at the Czar's must indeed have been a sight not conceivable out of Bedlam, and could only have been planned in the maddest brain on earth, if a MS. among the Sloane papers in the British Museum is believable. Such practical jokes! such wild, grotesque gambolling! the frolics of leviathan! the laughter of a Titan, as frightful in his fun as in his fury! There was accommodation at the Czar's table for about a hundred; but the grim humourist always issued invitations to twice or thrice that number, and left his guests to elbow, jostle, and fight for chairs and places, and retain them against all comers and claimants if they could. Not unfrequently a free fight was extemporised, and noses tapped, and even the sacred persons of ambassadors have been profanely touched and trifled with. The Czar sat at the head of the table, a broad grin on his face, rolling the spectacle like a sweet morsel under his tongue. The guests are so closely packed that feeding room is not to be thought of, and ribs are often blackened and almost driven by in active and vigorous

elbows, provoking fierce recriminations and quarrels. The kitchen is so near to the dining-hall that there floats through the latter a fragrance of onions, garlic, and train oil, mellowed and tempered by the more delicious aroma of the roast. The more knowing and initiated guests wave away soups and such-like edibles, and manifest a special appetite for tongues, hams, and viands that cannot be tampered with, or made the vehicles of practical joking, for as often as not it happens that a bunch of dead mice will be drawn out of the soup or discovered snugly embedded in a dish of green peas; and sometimes, when his guests have well partaken of certain pastries, the Czar will courteously inquire if the cat, wolf, raven, or other unclean animal proved a savoury or delicious morsel, with what result let the imaginative guess. The approach to a regular Donnybrook was hastened on by liberal supplies of brandies, strong ales, and wines so adroitly served out as to expedite the grand climacteric of drunkenness. But one plate was allowed to each guest; and if, reserving his appetite for some sweeter dish, he left off when but one-half of his serving of soup, or raven, or roast was consumed, it was a serious perplexity how he was to get rid of the rejected victuals and get his plate cleansed for a new supply. There was nothing for it but to empty the contents on his neighbour's plate; and then followed a game of battledore and shuttlecock, ending in blows, till the more peacefully disposed of the two bowlers threw the bone of contention under the table, wiping his polluted plate with his finger, and giving it a final polish with the tablecloth. A loving and brotherly frame of temper having thus been diffused throughout the festive throng, the Czar decrees that no one is to leave the filthy, crowded, and heated room till midnight, the dinner having begun at noon; but before the parting hour arrives, the guests, between loss of blood and loss of wit, are incapacitated for leaving, and make their beds promiscuously where they fall. Was ever such a lawless, chaotic orgy seen in a royal palace on earth since Belshazzar's feast, or will it ever be seen again? 'Nature brings not back the mastodon,' nor Peter the Great.

M. de Staehlin, giving an account of his ordinary manner of life, especially in his later years, says that his table was frugal, that he preferred plain fare; hotch-potch, roast pork or beef, and cheese, washed down by a little beer or the red wines of France and Hungary. He could not eat fish; and in his early youth he lived chiefly on fruits, pastries, and farinaceous diets. He usually dined at one in the afternoon, after which he retired to his bedroom for a couple of hours' sleep; and at four he revised the work of the forenoon. Summer and winter alike, he rose at four in the

morning, and after a light and hasty breakfast devoted his attention to affairs of state. He acquired a taste for strong liquors in his early youth; and this taste, it was alleged, was rather fostered than curbed by his sister Sophia, who was regent during his minority, and who had designs on the throne herself. His carousals, of which he often boasted, were frequent and deep; but M. de Staehlin represents him in his later years as having overmastered the vicious craving. Hot pepper and brandy was his favourite tipples for a while. He was in England for four months finishing his shipbuilding education, and he and his shopmates often retired to a public house near Tower Hill to recruit their exhausted energies with beer and brandy. In compliment to Peter, Boniface christened his house 'The Czar of Muscovy.' Here is the bill of fare of another of Peter's dinners, eaten this time in England; it is recorded in a letter from Mr. Humphrey Wanley to Dr. Charlett, and is preserved among the papers of Ballard's collection in the Bodleian Library:—'I cannot,' says Mr. Wanley, 'vouch for the following bill of fare which the Czar and his company of twenty-one ate at Godliming, in Surrey, but it is attested by an eye-witness who saw them eating, and who had it from the landlord. Breakfast: half a sheep, a quarter of lamb, ten pullets, twelve chickens, three quarts of brandy, six quarts of wine, and seven dozens of eggs, with salad in proportion.' A goodly breakfast, surely! but listen to the dinner: 'Five ribs of beef, 42 lbs. in all, one sheep, 56 lbs., three quarters of lamb, a shoulder and loin of boiled veal, eight pullets, eight rabbits, two and a half dozen of sack, a dozen of claret.' The Czar's visit must have seriously disturbed the meat markets of England if this is the record, not of a feast, but of an every-day meal.

In personal appearance Peter was tall and robust, quick and nimble of foot, and dexterous and rapid in all his movements. His face was plump and round. His eyes were large and bright, with brown eyebrows. His hair was short and curling and of a brownish colour. His look was fierce and restless, his gait quick and swinging. That superfine and satirical young lady, Wilhelmina, Margravine of Baireuth, describes him as tall and well-made. 'His countenance,' she says, 'is beautiful, but has something in it so rude and savage as to fill you with fear.' When she saw him during his visit to Frederick William's Court in 1717, he was dressed like a sailor, in a frock without lace or ornament. A fine, noble, heroic face the portraits represent him as having; only his gross eating and deep drinking, and low morals, had impaired its majesty, and given it rather a sensual and fallen expression. From his youth he had been subject to a spasmodic affection of the

nerves which always attacked him in his hours of rage. It is said to have resulted from a fright he received in early boyhood; some rebel soldiers forced their way into the convent where he was brought up, and flashed their naked swords round his head. The spasms showed themselves by a contortion of the muscles of the neck and of his face. Dining at Berlin, Wilhelmina tells how such an attack took place. 'At table the Czar was placed beside the Queen,' Wilhelmina's mother. 'There took him a kind of convulsion, something like Tic, or St. Vitus, which he seemed quite unable to control. He got into contortions and gesticulated wildly, and brandished about his knife within a yard of the Queen's face, who, in great alarm, made several times as if to rise. The Czar begged her to retain her composure as he would not hurt her, and took her by the hand and grasped it so violently that she shrieked out in pain. The Czar laughed heartily, and added that she had not bones of so hard a texture as his Catharine.' 'After supper a grand ball was opened, which the Czar evaded, and, leaving the others to dance, walked alone homewards to *Mon Bijou*, a palace which Frederick William had placed at his disposal, and in which the Czar and his suite made fearful havoc, almost breaking the thrifty King's heart. The sight of a beetle, it is alleged, had the effect of throwing him into such a fit, and the sight of a beautiful young woman had the effect of taking him out of one. M. de Staehlin says that when the Czar was so attacked the Empress was instantly sent for, and failing her, the first young woman that came in the way was conducted to the Czar's apartment; and, as if she had been sent for, was introduced with the formal announcement, 'Peter Alexievitz, this is the person you desired to speak with.' The soft voice and agreeable conversation and sweet presence of the charmer had such an effect on the Czar, that instantly the convulsion ceased and he was himself again, his visage calm and his humour sweet. Would that this had been the only spell or exorcism that such a presence could wield over him, but it seemed to awake more devils than it expelled. Peter's flesh was rebellious—by no means obedient to the higher sovereignties of his nature. The Czar and Czarina during their visit to Berlin were attended by a suite of ladies—ladies on the one hand, and washerwomen, cooks, housemaids, on the other, as circumstances required—almost every one of whom carried in her arms a richly robed child. On its paternity being inquired after, the chameleon mother replied, 'Le Czar m'a fait l'honneur de me faire cet enfant.' The following story shows both the weak and the good side of Peter's character. He fell in love with a beautiful young lady of the bourgeoisie class residing at Moscow,

and commanded her father to send her to his court. In horror and despair, the girl, without letting her parents know her intentions, left her home at the dead of night and sought shelter in the house of her old nurse. The Czar stormed and raved, and threatened her parents with Siberia unless they at once produced her. Their grief for their lost child at last persuaded even the Czar that they were innocent of the crime of thwarting his will. A 'hue and cry' was raised, and so large were the rewards offered for her recovery, that the whole country joined in an ineffectual search. The husband of her protector had built a hut of logs, thatched with brackens, on an oasis in the centre of a marsh surrounded by thick woods. Here she lived alone for a year, seeing no one except the woodman and his wife, who carried food to her in the dead of night. Here one day she was discovered by a huntsman, a colonel in the army, who had wandered far in pursuit of game. He entered into conversation with her, and her cultured voice and refined manner betrayed that she was not the peasant maiden her dress represented her to be. He taxed her with being Peter's lost heroine. In great fear she confessed; and, on her knees, with a broken voice, pleaded that he would not betray her hiding-place. He assured her that all danger was past, that Peter had forgotten her, and that she might return to her home. What experienced novel-reader cannot guess the rest of the story? The colonel took the news home to her sorrowing parents: but he did more, for he told the story to the Empress Catharine, and that kindly lady at once agreed to inform the Czar of the poor girl's sufferings, and ask His Majesty to forgive her. Peter had the rare virtue of being able to forgive those he had wronged. He at once settled a pension of 3,000 roubles a year on the girl, gave her the colonel for a husband, provided such a marriage feast as only a Czar can, gave away the bride, and congratulated the colonel on having secured the most virtuous woman in Russia as his wife. Captain Bruce, who was military tutor to the Czar's eldest son, testifies that this story, romantic though it seems, is true, and that he had it from the heroine's own lips.

The history of the Czarina Catharine is equally romantic. She was a mild, loving, kindly woman; and her influence over her irascible and savage husband was always on the side of mercy, and never used to inflame his fiery temper. Many a head did she save from the gallows, and many a back from the knout. The Margravine of Baireuth describes her as 'short and lusty, and remarkably coarse, without grace or animation. At first sight, any one would have judged her to be a third-rate German actress. Her clothes looked as though made for a big doll, they were so old-

fashioned and decked with tinsel. Along the facing of her gown were orders and little things of metal; a dozen orders, and as many portraits of saints, of relics, and the like; so that when she walked it was with a jingling, as if you heard a mule with bells to its harness,' a description which must be liberally discounted to get at the truth. The Margravine saw oddities wherever she looked, and was smart first and truthful afterwards. In her early life the Czarina's name was Martha. Her mother was a Livonian serf. She was left an orphan at the age of three. A Lutheran clergyman named Gluck saw her at the house of the priest of her native parish, who seems to have constituted himself the guardian of the poor, friendless orphan, and took her into his house in the capacity of nurse or 'slavey.' In exchange for her services she received her food, a fair education, and her clothing. As she grew up to girlhood she had her fair share of admirers, of whom she specially favoured a Livonian sergeant of the Swedish army. The day after their marriage the town of Marienburg was stormed by the Russians, and Martha's sergeant slain. As the captives filed past the Russian General Bauer, Martha's grief, tears, beauty, and youth provoked his sympathy. Learning her story, he took her into his own household as housekeeper and mistress. Here Prince Menzikoff one day saw her, and in his turn was fascinated by the romance of her story and the beauty of her person. He begged her as a present from the General. Martha was called in to decide whether she would go with the Prince or stay, the advantages of both alternatives being fairly set before her. She made a deep courtesy to the two gentlemen and retired, not having spoken a word. There can be little doubt in what capacity she lived with the Prince, at whose house the Czar one day saw her, and in his turn succumbed to her persuasive influence. In the year 1704 she, being then seventeen years of age, became the Czar's mistress, and afterwards his empress, first by a private and then by a public marriage, and finally, at his decease, autocrat of All the Russias. The Czar got deeply attached to her, and was never happy when 'my Catharine' was absent. She was cheerful and lively, of a sweet, pliable disposition; never peevish or perverse; and moved around her bear of a husband, anticipating his every want. She bore the burden of the honour to which she had not been born with meekness and lowliness, and never forgot her humble birth and upbringing. 'What! thou good man! art thou still alive?' she said in the days of her splendour to Wurmb, who had been her fellow-servant in Gluck's household, he as tutor, she as maid-of-all-work. 'I will provide for thee,' she said, and got him a pension. She befriended the family of her benefactor Gluck, who had died a

prisoner in Moscow ; his son she took as her page, gave portions to his widow and two eldest daughters, and appointed the youngest a maid of honour at her court. Catharine's ready wit once saved the Czar and his army from dishonour and destruction. It was during one of his campaigns against the Turks. The Russian army was completely surrounded ; provisions and ammunition were all but exhausted, and every attempt to break out of this trap resulted in repulse and defeat. Crushed down with despair, which brought on the spasms to which he was subject, the Czar entered his tent, ordering that no one should intrude. Catharine dared to disobey, and learned from him the hopeless condition of his army. Without consulting anyone, she despatched an ambassador to the Grand Vizier to make overtures of peace, loading him with gifts. Her own jewels and trinkets she tore off her body, and went the round of the camp, collecting all the valuables she could find, for which she gave receipts, signed by her own hand, and a promissory note payable on her return to Moscow. She also ordered preparations and bustling as for another and more serious effort to break the Turkish lines, and even led the Russian army within a hundred paces of the Turkish front, before the Grand Vizier consented to a truce, preliminary to a treaty of peace. The Czar never forgot his Catharine's heroism. He instituted a new order of Knighthood, which he called the Order of St. Catharine ; and struck a medal bearing her image, encircled by precious stones, with the motto ' For Love and Fidelity ' engraven upon it. And here is the manifesto he issued when he decreed her his successor on the throne. After reciting the dangers to which he had been exposed during his twenty years' wars, he continues :—' The Empress Catharine, our dearest consort, was an important help to us in all these dangers in which she voluntarily accompanied us, serving us with all her counsel, notwithstanding the natural weakness of her sex : more particularly at the battle of Pruth, where our army was reduced to 22,000 men, while the Turks were 220,000 strong. It was in these desperate circumstances above all others that she signalised her zeal, by a courage superior to her sex, as is well known to the whole army throughout the Empire. For these reasons, and in virtue of that power which God has given us, we are resolved to honour our spouse with the Imperial Crown in acknowledgment of all her services and fatigues.'

The disposition of Peter is generally represented to have been vicious and cruel. It is usual to depict him as a lawless despot who ordered heads to be lopped off in cold blood when the caprice seized him. His defects, however, seem rather to have been outside knots and gnarls in a noble tree, than serious twists in the

grain of his being. Severe, doubtless, he was; but his severity was seldom the outburst of mere passion, almost invariably the means to an end, that end being the redemption of Russia from chaos, and the establishment of the reign of law. Justice tempered by severity is often a blessing to a community that is little better than a social and political wild; and the wisdom and not the severity of the measures employed to regenerate his country is what we should chiefly look to in the case of Peter the Great, who had a half-civilised nation to discipline and make law-respecting and law-abiding. Seldom, especially in his riper years, was a delinquent punished without trial before a competent tribunal; and if Peter interfered with the sentences of the courts, which he seldom did, it was always to mitigate and not to aggravate the punishment. Once, when he was thought dying, it was suggested to him that he should release all the criminals in prison. 'Why,' said he, 'will God more readily forgive my sins because I have flooded Russia with its locked-up rascaldom?' The frequent rebellions against his government, fomented often by his own relations, were suppressed with a relentless hand, and the ringleaders were brought to vigorous justice; but what autocrat would have respected the forms of law as he did when his choice was either to destroy his enemies or be destroyed by them? and was it not an additional aggravation that these revolts always broke out while he was away labouring and toiling for the good of Russia, learning ship-building in Holland, repelling the inroads of the Turks or Swedes, or fighting to give his country a seaboard? He signed the decree for the execution of his eldest son; and although the crimes of the latter would not be visited by such punishment now, there was nothing arbitrary or self-willed about the Czar's conduct in the business. Indeed, his previous expostulations, warnings, pleadings with his perverse and prodigal son are almost heartrending. You see in him an agonising wrestle between love of Russia and love of his child; and had Peter only lived two thousand years earlier and been a Roman consul, we should have lauded his patriotism, his stoic virtue, his readiness to inflict the keenest suffering on himself, when his country's weal required it. But he was only a half-civilised Tartar savage, and his nature was torn with conflicting emotions; and he had not the philosophic and unruffled repose of speech and manner and feeling that makes a Lucius Junius Brutus so grand and admirable, and which to the present writer seems simply hateful. I will back this headstrong, illiterate, and noisy barbarian against any Roman of them all for the truest and most loveable humanity. What fate would Hannibal have met at

the hands of Rome had he been captured? What doom did she decree to those who dared to defend their homes and hearths against her conquering armies? Dragged them at her chariot wheels, or threw them to the lions, or made them butcher each other in the Amphitheatre, 'to make a Roman holiday.' That they were noble and wise, and honoured in their own land, only added zest and flavour to the sport. It was not thus that Peter treated the heroes he had conquered. He gave a grand entertainment in honour of the Swedish Admiral Ehrenschild, who had been taken prisoner of war. After the dinner he rose and said, 'Gentlemen, you see here a brave and faithful servant of his master, who has made himself worthy of the highest honour at his hands, and who shall always have my favour while he is with me, though he has killed me many a brave man. I forgive you,' he added, turning with a smile to the Swede, 'and you may always depend on my good-will.' Ehrenschild, thanking the Czar, replied, 'However honourably I may have acted with regard to my master, I did no more than my duty. I sought death, but failed to meet it; and it is no small comfort to me in my misfortune to be a prisoner of your Majesty, and to be treated with so much distinction by such a mighty captain.' After the battle of Pultowa, too, when he broke the power of Charles XII., he displayed equal magnanimity towards the officers whom the fate of war had forced to yield up their swords. In the course of the banquet he gave in honour of them, Peter pledged a bumper 'to his tutors in the art of war.' One of the Swedish generals asked to whom he referred. 'Yourselves, gentlemen,' the Czar replied, 'the brave Swedish commanders.' 'Then,' asked his colloquist, 'has not your Majesty been somewhat ungrateful in dealing so hardly with your teachers?' The Czar was so pleased with the reply, that he unbuckled his own sword and presented it to the general, requesting that he would wear it in token of his esteem for his valour and fidelity to his sovereign. Revenge and every other Roman virtue would have prompted him to a different course. In an earlier stage of this contest Charles had stormed or seized Dresden, the capital of Saxony, to which kingdom Peter's ambassador, Patkul, had been attested. Him Charles kept in chains for three months, and finally, to quote what he calls his own 'merciful' decree, 'broke upon the wheel and quartered, for the reparation of his crimes and as a warning to others.' The Czar was highly incensed; but instead of following the advice of his ministers to retaliate on the Swedish officers, he administered a severe rebuke to them for suggesting that he should stain his name with such an infamous crime. With all his

blood-thirstiness and irascibleness of temper, Peter was far above petty feelings of revenge.

The Czar cared little for outward pomp, believing that true greatness did not need to assert itself or pose in fine apparel or ostentatious magnificence. He dodged the receptions which his brother sovereigns got up in his honour, and spoke of them as unutterably childish and tiresome. Once at least he accompanied an ambassador to a foreign Court in the character of a private gentleman attached to the embassy, and took humble lodgings to disarm suspicion that he was other than he professed to be. There was a fibre of fine and beautiful simplicity in his character. While he was toiling as a shipwright at Zaandam, where he spent nine months learning his trade, he dressed like his fellow-workmen, in a round hat, white linen jacket and trousers, and joined in their banter and heavy Dutch chaff as well as his pretty considerable knowledge of the language would permit. While acting as a workman he let himself be spoken to and treated as one. He would take a heavy barrow from the hands of a feebler shopmate and hurl the load to its destination. Many a knotty mechanic thumb did he bandage and dress, for he was proud of his surgical skill. He had self-control enough to treat with all desirable deference and respect the foremen in the several yards in which he laboured, bound himself to adhere to the regulations in force, and requested to be enrolled in the books and addressed by the name of Peter Zimmerman. The Duke of Marlborough, in search of amusement, entered the shipbuilding yard one day, and asked the foreman to point out the Czar without making them known to each other. 'Peter Zimmerman,' cried the master to His Majesty, 'why don't you help those men toiling with that big log?' Peter at once ran to the assistance of his sweating and overtasked 'chums,' never suspecting that he was being trotted out for exhibition. His simplicity of character seems to be belied by the following speech he addressed to William III., who was then in Holland: 'Most renowned Emperor! it was not the desire of seeing the celestial cities of the German Empire or the most powerful Republic of the Universe that made me leave my throne and my victorious armies to come into a distant country; it was solely the ardent desire of paying my respects to the most brave and generous hero of the day, &c.' The speech is so ridiculous, bombastic, foreign to Peter's nature, that it must have been written for him, or composed by him under the inspiration of that vanity to which lads just getting out of their teens are specially prone. 'Never fear,' he once said while out at sea in a storm, and the sailors were getting alarmed; 'the Czar Peter cannot be

drowned; did you ever hear of a Russian Czar perishing on the waters?' Such hours of self-consciousness occur in the lives of all youths of talent, but do not all give tone or colour to their riper character. During the four months he spent in England, William learned to appreciate the worth of the Czar in spite of his rough, uncouth ways and silly speeches and grotesque manners. Could anything denote less self-consciousness than this? The King's servants often laughed at him to his face, yet he left 120 guineas to be distributed among them. He presented to the monarch a rough ruby which the Amsterdam jewellers valued at 10,000*l.*, and which he carried to the palace in his vest pocket wrapped in a piece of fusty old brown paper. Once, while he was in Berlin, Frederick William sent a magnificent chariot drawn by richly caparisoned horses to drive him to the palace. Peter, seeing it arrive, went out of the back door of his lodgings and walked to the Court, instructing the gentlemen of his suite to follow in the carriage. Thanking and apologising to the King, the Czar said he was not accustomed to such splendour, and often walked five times as much at a stretch. Nothing pleased him better than to receive his old shopmates at St. Petersburg, and be addressed by them in the old familiar names, Peter Zimmerman, Peter Baas, or even Skipper Peter. And that he saw through the folly of such speeches as that he delivered to William is clear from the following. Shortly after the battle of Pultowa he visited Holland again. The municipalities arranged to give him a splendid reception. William's Dutch Earl, Albemarle, then on a visit to the States, was deputed to bid the Czar welcome. This he did in a speech which vied for exaggeration with Peter's own to the Earl's master. 'I thank you heartily,' said the Czar in reply, 'though I don't understand much of what you say. I learnt my Dutch among shipbuilders, but the sort of language you have spoken I am sure I never learnt.' On the same visit he requested the shipbuilders and workmen not to call him 'Majesty.' 'Come, brothers,' said he, 'let us talk like plain honest shipwrights;' and then, summoning a servant who was filling the glasses out of a beer jug, he laughingly demanded the 'can,' and having got it, said, 'I can now drink as much as I like, and nobody can tell what I have taken.'

He attended surgical classes in Holland. Indeed, he dabbled in all the sciences and mechanical arts, but was specially proud of his attainments as a surgeon. He gloried in drawing a tooth, bleeding a patient, tapping for dropsy, or lopping off a limb; and on his return to Russia started a limited practice. His own valet once availed himself of Peter's weakness as a vehicle of revenge

on his wife for her unfaithfulness, a misdemeanour towards which Peter was very tolerant. Noticing the flunkey with a sad countenance, the Czar asked the matter. 'Nothing, sire, but my wife has a toothache and won't let the tooth be drawn.' 'Let me see her,' said Peter, 'and I warrant you I'll cure her.' The poor woman insisted she had no toothache. 'Sire,' said the valet, 'she always says that when I bring the doctor.' 'Hold her arm then,' said His Majesty, 'and we'll relieve her suffering.' Peter seized the tooth which the woman's husband pointed to as the bad one and smartly whirled it out. The Czar afterwards discovered that he had been tricked, and the poor woman made to suffer unnecessarily, and he gave the valet a knouting with his own royal hands.

He had a strong dislike to be stared at, and hated all kinds of fêtes and ceremonies, unless he could mingle in the common crowd. 'Too many folks, too many folks,' he would say, when asked to take a part in any pageant.

A barber at Amsterdam, who had seen a description and portrait of him, was the first to pierce Peter's incognito, and confided the secret to each of his customers, who thereupon went about publishing it. Crowds at once gathered round his dwelling, and Peter sulked in his room for days. He was specially annoyed by the curiosity of the English, who forced themselves into his room while he was eating, and gazed at him with the celebrated stony British stare, as if he were a phenomenon. An amusing account is given in the *Life of Thomas Story* of an interview two Quakers cunningly effected with him. They endeavoured to persuade him to adopt Quaker principles, and presented him with several treatises on the subject for private study. The good-natured Czar promised to attend their meeting, where it is said he conducted himself with great decorum. He wanted to see Parliament without being seen, 'in order to which,' Lord Dartmouth says, 'he was placed in a gutter upon the housetop, to peep in at the window, where he made so ridiculous a figure that neither king nor people could forbear laughing, which obliged him to retire sooner than he intended.'

Contact with the world brushed this shyness wholly off him. The Quaker interview must have made some impression on him, for many years afterwards, when at Friedrickstadt, in Holstein, he inquired if there was any Quaker meeting in the place. As there happened to be one, he ordered his suite to accompany him, though they were quite ignorant of the language. The Czar kept up a running interpretation as the service proceeded, and afterwards thanked the preacher, saying, 'that whoever could live up to his doctrine would be happy.'

On his second visit to a town in Holland, he and the burgo-master of the place attended divine service, when an unconscious action of the Czar almost upset the gravity of the congregation. Peter feeling his head growing cold turned to the heavily wigged chief magistrate at his side and transferred the wig, the hair of which flowed down over the great-little man's shoulders, to his own head, and sat so till the end of the service, when he returned it to the insulted burgomaster, bowing his thanks. The great man's fury was not appeased till one of Peter's suite assured him that it was no practical joke at all that His Majesty had played, that his usual custom when at church, if his head was cold, was to seize the nearest wig he could clutch. Peter was tolerant towards all religious opinions, and wherever he was, attended church without asking after its special *ism*. The first building he erected in St. Petersburg was a citadel; the second, a church.

There are some stories told about Peter that do honour to his heart and disposition. On his arrival at Zaandam his first care was to search out and befriend the widow of a skipper of the name of Munsch, who had given him his first lesson in seamanship at Archangel, representing himself to be a fellow-workman of her late husband. In the retinue that accompanied the embassy to Holland there was a dwarf, who was Peter's faithful attendant at all festivities. One day there was no room in the carriage for this manikin, and it was suggested that he should travel in another. 'By no means,' said the Czar, and took the pigmy on his knee. The delight with which his old shipmates received him on his second visit to Holland may be easily imagined. As he landed, a thousand stentorian lungs cried out 'Welcome, Peter Baas!' while to his surprise a gushing old lady rushed forward to embrace him. 'My good lady,' said His Majesty, 'how do you know who I am?' 'Your Majesty,' she replied, 'often sat down and shared our humble meals nineteen years ago. I am the wife of Baas Pool.' The Czar instantly returned her salute, kissed her on the forehead, and invited himself to dine again with her that very day.

Peter's highest ambition was to make Russia a great maritime power. He used to say, what Russia is practically saying still alike in Europe and in Asia, that it was not land that he wanted but sea. Not only did he spend a year of his life learning shipbuilding, but to popularise the service he even toiled as a common sailor. To foster the love of a seafaring life he had a garden laid out in an island near St. Petersburg, on which he built a palace. He presented boats to the nobility, that they might be able to visit him, on the condition that each should keep his vessel in order and provide another when it was done. He encouraged them

to vie with each other in regatta competitions. The Muscovite priests taught that it was a crime to leave Russia and travel in the land of the infidel, yet the Czar, in his zeal for the development of Russia, braved their religious fury and prejudice. He ordered the nobility to go abroad and acquire, not only the manners of foreign Courts and countries, but their arts and sciences, especially naval architecture. A story is told of one who returned from Venice as ignorant as he went. 'What the deuce have you been learning?' said the Czar. 'Sire, I smoked my pipe, drank my brandy, and rarely stirred out of my room.' More amused than enraged, Peter suggested that the lord should be made one of his Court fools on the spot. He had the bitterest opposition and prejudice to contend with in his efforts to make Russia respected and great. In his search for a sea-border, he extended his dominion to the sea of Azoph, the Caspian Sea, and the Gulf of Finland.

Amsterdam was the model he had in his mind while planning St. Petersburg. He had a nervous dread of the sea to overcome in his youth, and this he did by spending all his spare time on the river that flows through Moscow. He passed himself through a regular curriculum as a sailor, and never gave himself a higher commission till he had earned it. He started as the ship's drudge, was then promoted to be cook's menial, whose work was to light the fire, wash the dishes, and make himself generally useful; next he became cabin-boy and waited at table; and it was a proud moment in his life when he attained the high position of a sailor before the mast, and in smooth waters was permitted to handle the helm. He fought as a captain of Bombardiers in a naval fight with the Swedes, and was awarded the order of St. Andrew for his gallant conduct; and after the glorious action at which Admiral Ehrenschild was taken prisoner, he was summoned by the Vice-Czar Romanofsky, by his name of Rear-Admiral Peter, to take his seat beside the throne, and in recognition of his daring and success was promoted to the office of Vice-Admiral of Russia, amid cries of 'Long live the Vice-Admiral!' He left Russia, which he got without a ship, with a fleet of 41 vessels ready for service, carrying 2,106 guns, manned by 15,000 seamen, besides a number of frigates and galleys.

Peter died in the arms of his Catharine on January 28, 1725, some say poisoned by her; but that seems not believable. His body lay in state in the palace till the day of interment, March 21. In the interval between his death and burial his third daughter departed this life, and the obsequies of father and child were celebrated together amid the tears of a sorrowing nation, for the people had begun to see the genuine worth and virtue of their monarch

through his rough outside coating. No memory is more fondly cherished in Russia than Peter's. Everything that can remind the nation of him is carefully treasured in her museums; his hat, sword, dogs, horse, even his old clothes, and the wooden hut he erected with his own hands while supervising St. Petersburg as it rose above the waters—all are sacred. He loved Russia with a kingly love, and sacrificed his son rather than that an unqualified and worthless monarch should preside over its destinies. 'I would rather,' said he, 'commit my people to an entire stranger who was worthy of such a trust than to my own undeserving offspring.' It is not the language of hyperbole to say that he invented Russia. His merits as a wise statesman and legislator far surpass his defects as a tyrant. In such a kingdom as his, tyranny was the kindest rule. Individuals might have to suffer, but the principles of justice such tyranny as Peter's vindicated and defended are benefits and blessings to the end of time. He was an untutored genius who had to create an ideal of kingcraft for himself; and if he failed let readers judge. If an apology is needed for his frailties, rough methods, boorishness of mind, barbarianism, the apology we offer is that he took the shape the conditions of Russian society and the environment around him would permit—that these defects belonged rather to his times than to himself; while whatever of good he was or great he did, was the result of the throes of his own groping and darkly struggling spirit, earnest intellect, and determined will.

JAMES FORFAR.

Overburdened.

O SAGE, who hadst never beheld
The Righteous forsaken, nor seen
His seed to beg pittance compelled—
These days are not those that have been !

O Bard, who hast told us that never
Breathed Mortal but clung to his life,
And was loath to depart, and to sever
His lot from its struggle and strife :

Thy lines must have fallen, indeed,
In places far other than ours,
Where the nettle and bramble and weed
Choke the grain and o'ershadow the flowers.

O Saint, who couldst welcome the Grave
As the gate of a lifetime to come,
Thou wast never as we are : the Slave
Draws a far other picture of Home.

No more Life, though he spend it in praise ;
No more Toil, though the toil may be blessed :
'Tis oh for the Night that ends his Days,
And the Death that brings him Rest !



Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER XX.

‘IT WAS A FOOL’S BUSINESS.’

THE possibility of the bank collapsing had never been suspected ; therefore Michael was the more startled when he learned that its doors had been closed, and hence his hasty journey to London. Even then he did not imagine that any very serious loss would disturb the prosperity of Marshstead and the Meadow ; he knew that he could not lose much, and he was only anxious on Polly’s account, for his notions of what interests she had at stake in the bank were of the most vague kind. On that subject Job Hazell had been always curiously reticent ; and Michael was too good a son, and too indifferent about anything which was not freely confided to him, to make inquiries.

His father’s exclamation now conveyed to him the impression of a calamity so far beyond anything his wildest anxiety could have suggested, that he was stupefied and for a time unconscious of pain. He sat quite still, his face white, his eyes fixed on the old man opposite ; not thinking, but waiting for something to quicken him again into sensibility and reason.

For a little while Job was in the same condition as his son ; but he was the first to recover the power of speech. Resting his elbows on the arms of his chair, he bent eagerly forward, and, although his voice did not rise above a whisper, was evidently trying to speak loudly and firmly.

‘ Say it again, lad ; I can’t make it out. My head has got queer somehow, and things are going round, and round, and round—and I can’t catch ’em, or fix ’em right. *Did* you say the County Bank is broke ? ’

Michael nodded : that was all he was able to do ; but the first shock of the blow was almost over, and his mind was beginning to escape from the fog which had enshrouded it.

Job got his handkerchief and wiped the perspiration from his brow. He wished to misunderstand Michael’s words : there might be some horrible blunder in it all. He had known of cases in which sound ‘ concerns ’ had been ruined by false rumours. Michael might have been deceived—as thousands of others had

been—and perhaps he had mistaken a temporary difficulty for a total collapse.

‘You can’t be sure of a thing of this sort all at once,’ he began to argue piteously, and more with himself than with his son. ‘They do make such a fuss when a bank closes its doors. Like enough it will all come right yet.’

‘No,’ said Michael, rousing himself; ‘I saw Patchett in London. He has been making inquiries and trying to get out money belonging to some of his clients. He says there will not be a farthing left for anybody.’

Patchett was the village attorney, and Job knew him as one of the sharpest and shrewdest of his profession.

‘Oh, Lord! oh, Lord,’ he groaned, rocking himself to and fro. ‘Poor Polly! she has lost all.’

‘But how does that happen?’

‘My fault, lad, my fault.’

‘Your fault!’ And Michael stared in new amazement at his father.

‘Ay, mine. I oughtn’t to have left all the eggs in one basket, that’s certain, and it’s common sense. But I couldn’t see what was coming—how could I? A fool’s business it was from beginning to end, and I ought to have known it in time.’

‘I wish you would tell me, dad, how it is that you are to blame for the misfortune.’

‘Give me a breath; I can’t speak at this minute—I can’t think. Let me be for a while, and I’ll tell you all about it.’

Michael did not attempt to question him further: there was in his nature a strong element of that veneration for parental authority which rendered him ready at all times to obey without murmur, and to submit even when he doubted. That is a respect which fathers rarely find nowadays, when the youth always knows so much more and better than his elders.

He went out to the fields, desirous of reflecting on the whole matter in solitude. The terrier, Ted, followed and gambolled around him, barking to attract attention, but he was unheeded. Michael tramped on through the grass, the dewdrops on which glistened in the moonlight like diamonds; and through the spaces in the trees the light shone like so many great cold eyes glaring upon him. The sky was clear and radiant with many stars and planets; at his feet frogs croaked and leaped, making splashes in the ditch; and at length Ted, finding that he could not please his master, set off on a scamper to amuse himself.

How was he to save her? How was he even to help her? These were the questions he had to face and answer. His love

would have supplied him with more than sufficient motive for straining every nerve to protect her from the consequences of this misfortune ; but, besides, the self-reproaches uttered by his father—and which he, scarcely half-understanding, interpreted literally—caused him to believe that all they possessed ought to be straight-way delivered over to Polly. But he did justice to his father. Let the explanation come when it might, he knew that no intentional wrong had been done by him ; therefore Polly herself would be the first to exclaim against the absurdity of such a Quixotic proceeding as he felt disposed to carry out, namely, to go to her and say—‘ We have lost your fortune ; take ours.’

There was one way in which the difficulty might be overcome—if she would only consent ! But that was not to be thought of at present. Job had told him of the visit to the Meadow, of Walton being sent away, and declared that nothing was wanting to make Polly say ‘ yes ’ but a little more courage on his part. Michael was vexed by the attempt to force consent from her, and did his best to avoid any sign of awkwardness in her presence. He came and went as before, and she was grateful to him for thus entirely ignoring his father’s indiscreet mission.

The moon sailed out from a long line of cloud mountains. The light was cold and unsympathetic ; the calmness of the hour which had been always so grateful to him, although it soothed his perturbed brain, yet seemed full of sadness. Had she been with him he would have seen beauty everywhere. So nature is sad or glad in accord with our own humours.

The walk and the cool air had done him good. Gradually the troubled face had become calm, and the excited steps more measured. By the time he turned towards the house he was beginning to see the outline of a definite plan of action. He halted by a low hedge and gazed in the direction of the Meadow farm. He would have liked to go there, to see her in happiness for one night before she became aware of what had befallen her ; to see her smile, to hear her laugh ! He turned away, without sighing, but with an eager light in his eyes as he iterated the question he had been putting to himself during the last half-hour :

‘ *Must* she know it ? Could no way be discovered by which the loss might be hidden from her for ever ? ’

He made his usual round of the offices to see that all lights were out and everything made secure for the night. Then he entered the house.

The parlour was almost dark, for Job had forgotten to attend to the lamp, and the wick had burned low. Michael saw him in the dim light still seated where he had left him. The old man’s body

was bent forward, with elbows resting heavily on his knees ; in one hand a match, in the other his pipe, filled but unlit. He seemed to have paused just as he had been about to apply the light, and to have become oblivious as to what he had intended to do, like one stricken with an epileptic fit. It was a bad sign when Job forgot to light his pipe : it had been for many years the sweet soother of his angry passions when they rose and his comforter in moments or hours of sorrow.

He did not move or speak at the entrance of his son ; and Michael, startled by his silence, instantly turned up the light. Job's eyes blinked, as if pained ; he drew a long breath, and continued the action which had been arrested by one of those fits of abstraction that often seize the troubled mind : he struck the match, and attempted to light his pipe. But the pipe would not draw, somehow, and in the course of the conversation he wasted many matches.

' You look ill, dad,' said Michael gently ; ' can I do anything for you ? '

' You can't expect me to be well after what you have told me,' was the fretful answer. ' Go over it all again. That's the only thing you can do for me. I haven't got a right hold of the thing yet. Did you say it was a hopeless case ? '

' Quite hopeless. But we had better not talk any more about it to-night. When you have had a rest we shall be better able to think of what we have to do ; and besides, we shall have more correct information in the morning than I was able to get to-day.'

' Tell me again, I say. Do you think I can sleep before I see the best or the worst of it ? This I do see—don't take charge of another man's affairs. You can suffer your own losses, and only have yourself to blame yourself ; but it's different when you have got others to blame you as well as yourself. Tell me again.'

Michael was almost as much distressed by the strange mood of his father as by the calamity which had befallen Polly. He repeated all that he knew about the failure of the bank. There had been scarcely a whisper to suggest its insolvency, even a few days ago, in the rural districts where the branch offices had been for a long time doing a thriving business. Only two months previous to the crash a very satisfactory dividend had been declared by the directors.

' What are we to do for her ? ' was Job's helpless cry.

Then Michael seized the moment to let his heart speak. He had no thought of how far his father was to blame for the misfortune ;

no heed of what loss might be entailed upon himself: the only thought was to save her from sorrow, and so he said:

‘Give up everything we have, dad, if we can arrange it so that she may never know what we have done. Then she would not suffer, and I—that is, we would be comfortable.’

His face brightened as he made this wild proposal; he felt that he had discovered the right way out of the difficulty. There was no wildness in the proposal as it appeared to his mind: if his father were in any way responsible for her loss, they were bound to make it good. What could be more clear? Then, knowing her spirit, he foresaw that she would refuse to accept this restitution of her lost fortune; therefore he desired it to be made without letting her know that she had run the risk of any loss at all.

The course was not quite so plain to his father’s eyes. Job certainly desired to be comfortable; and he had a conscience which was sufficiently sensitive to make him eager to be at peace with this world and the next, and fervently desirous of steering clear of any act which might afterwards involve self-reproach. At the same time the experience of years suggests many reasons for delaying the execution of impulsive thoughts, and for evading what in the hey-day of life and love would have appeared to be an imperative duty. Michael had the youth and the love which made him ready for any sacrifice; Job had the age and experience which made him object to the idea of suddenly casting away the store he had gathered up. So he said:

‘I am to blame, as I told you, but it’s only so far as giving in to her father’s notions is concerned. I said it was a fool’s business at the time, and so it has turned out. You needn’t think I did any wrong more nor giving in when I knew I oughtn’t to.’

‘I was sure of that, dad,’ said Michael, relieved, although he had never doubted that his father had acted for the best in whatever he had done. ‘But how does the matter stand?’

‘You see, Holt was pretty well on in years when he got married, and Polly was his only child. He had always been a queer chap, but he got queerer and queerer after his missus went away—she *was* a fine woman! You maybe don’t recollect much of her, but she was a real good woman, and a heap cleverer nor Polly even. Holt got sour; he couldn’t understand why the Lord should have fixed such a trouble on him; and although the parson tried hard to convince him that it was all for his good, and that he ought to say humbly, “Thy will be done,” he couldn’t see it. There was a-many other wives that might have been taken for the good of their men, and with more reason, as it always seemed to him.’

Job paused, and his thoughts seemed to wander away to old times and faces, so that he forgot what he had intended to tell.

‘But about the money?’ said Michael presently.

‘I’m coming to that. Holt got the notion into his head that he wasn’t going to live long; he saw Polly was to grow up the handsome wench she is, and he worried himself day and night as to what was to come of her. She had a goodish bit of money, and that, with herself, he feared, was like as not to fall into the wrong hands when he was out of the way. So one day he says, “We’ve been friends a long while now, Job, and real brothers, I believe.” “True,” says I. “Then I mean to show you,” says he, “that I can trust you to do for me, when I am gone, what I would do for myself—I want you to be a father to Polly.” “I would have been that without asking,” says I, “if so be as you are taken off first.” “I know that, Job, but there’s something more. I have a mighty fancy for your lad Michael, and if the two happen to pull together I want them to marry. But she mayn’t care for him, and she may care for somebody else; now, if the somebody else is a lad you feel that you can trust in, all right; if he isn’t, then this is how I mean to square matters. More than half my money is in the County Bank shares: I mean to make it all over to you——” “What?” says I, thinking he was going wrong in his head. “Wait a minute,” says he; “it’s only to make things safe for her. If she takes Michael or somebody that you believe to be a trusty mate for her, then you will hand it all back; but if you can’t trust the man she marries, you will give it all—all, mind you, to the last penny—to Michael.”’

‘And did you agree?’ cried Michael, astounded by the extraordinary nature of the arrangement.

‘I told him hard enough that it was a fool’s business, and would lead us all into trouble by and by. But he wouldn’t have no. Then I said he ought to hand the money over to Hodsoll, his own wife’s brother. “I won’t trust no lawyers,” he hollered at me, and I thought it would be the end of him there and then. I got him to go to ’torney Hodsoll, though, and you may be certain *he* wasn’t pleased with this way of doing things. Holt said he would go straight to Patchett; and whether it was that or because he left something to Sarah, Hodsoll consented to do the job. At the same time he made a will for me, and it gives everything back to Polly, no matter what may happen us. That’s how it stands as near as I can make it out; but my head’s queer to-night.’

He sank back on his chair with a wearied expression.

‘And does she know about this cruel arrangement?’

‘No more than that she might look for som’at from me.’

Michael was silent for a long time; then, with intense relief, he said quietly:

‘Thank heaven, dad, I think we can help Polly.’

CHAPTER XXI.

MARKET-DAY, AND TEA AT THE VICARAGE.

MARKET-DAY in Dunthorpe, and there were greater numbers than usual of country folk patrolling the High Street and gathered in front of the principal inns. Shop-windows had been all cleaned for the occasion and signs washed. The best wares of the various establishments were placed in the most attractive positions; the tradesmen’s wives wore their best smiles, and the husbands were bustling about collecting accounts and seeking new custom.

But there was not much business transacted in Dunthorpe that day. The extra influx of people was due to the bank failure, for a considerable proportion of the farmers of the district were personally involved in the crash, and the others were interested on account of their friends. Even the prices of hay and cattle attracted small attention compared to that which was given to the eager inquiries as to who was bankrupt; who would be able to weather the storm; and who was safe?

There were sad and anxious faces everywhere mingled with those expressing complacent sympathy. There were the safe ones who, congratulating themselves on the prescience which had kept them out of such a scrape, commiserated the losers and hastened away from the market, lest they should be required to help to keep a tottering neighbour on his feet. This was in most cases a prudent selfishness, and those who adopted it argued fairly enough that, as they had families to support, there could be no sense in jumping on board a sinking ship. There were some, however, who accepted the risk and saved a friend from ruin; others went down with those they tried to save. Then the wise ones who had come off free congratulated themselves, and were extremely sorry for the misfortunes of their neighbours.

The happiest people in the whole town seemed to be the labourers, the shepherds, and the cattle-drovers; the maidens who were out for a holiday, or looking for situations—on which latter object they were clearly much less intent than on enjoying themselves with the favoured swains of the day. Blessed in their lot, and in their lot content—for the moment at any rate—they made merry in the bright sunshine; the rosy cheeks were full of laughter, and the sparkling eyes never saw the sad faces around them. They

had no stocks or shares or sick cattle to cloud the holiday, and from them the peripatetic vendors of nuts and ginger-beer derived their custom. By and by the taprooms of both inns became crowded; and on the green in front of the 'Grey Goose' an impromptu dance was got up by the merry lads and lasses, a wandering fiddler having been seized for the occasion, seated on a table, and well supplied with beer as well as coppers. The fun became decidedly rough as the evening closed, and it was nearly midnight before the last sounds of the roysterers' voices were heard in the village. Then home, headaches, and repentance.

Polly and Sarah were together in the market, and from this friend and that they heard mysterious rumours to the effect that Job Hazell was seriously involved by the failure of the bank, that he had taken to his bed, and was not likely to recover from the shock. This was the first market which Job had failed to attend for many years, and his absence gave rise to the most alarming reports of his illness.

Whilst Sarah delivered the eggs and butter she had brought to their regular customers, Polly looked eagerly for Michael, in order to learn how far the rumours were true; but he did not appear, and the absence of father and son gave rise to much wonder. She, however, met Eben Tyler, the stout, good-natured holder of the Brook farm, and he was able to relieve her mind. He had seen old Hazell that morning, and, although he seemed to be rather shaky and not himself, there had not appeared to be anything very seriously the matter with him. As for Michael, he had gone again to London on some business in connection with the bank.

'It's a hard thing for them,' said Tyler warmly, 'but it cannot be so bad with them as with many others. Hazell was too clever to keep all his eggs in one basket; and even if the worst should happen there are a dozen—and more—of us who would stand by him and Michael to the last. They will suffer, of course, but they will get over the difficulty.'

'I am glad indeed to hear that,' said Polly, her cheeks flushing with joy; 'for the dreadful things I have heard made me think that they were quite ruined, and that Uncle Job would die.'

'No fear of that. He has Michael beside him, and if anybody can put things straight he will do it. Keep your mind easy on that score; and I'm joyful to learn that you don't lose much by the bank.'

'I believe not, thank you.'

Polly was reassured to some extent, and quite relieved from any immediate anxiety about Uncle Job's health. Still, she *thought* it well to call on Dr. Humphreys and ask him to pay a

visit to Marshstead that afternoon, without saying that she had sent him. She was fortunate in finding the Doctor at home, and he, a kindly, ruddy-faced, white-headed old man, agreed to do as she wished, although, as he laughingly told her, he knew Job Hazell to be the most inveterate sceptic in regard to medical science.

Then she had to meet Sarah, and proceed with her to the Vicarage, where they were to take tea before starting homeward. She would have liked to escape that visit, for she was eager to get to Marshstead; but there was the hope of gathering more news at the Vicarage, and she had a sufficient excuse for making her stay short.

There were many vague projects running through her mind as to what she could and ought to do, if Uncle Job's loss should prove to be really serious; but she saw nothing clearly so far, and she was saying to herself that her wits were wool-gathering to no purpose, when Tom Walton reached her side.

'I am glad to find you, Miss Holt,' he said cheerily; 'I was sent from the Vicarage to remind you that you are expected to tea.'

'I was going there,' she said briskly and quite recalled to herself by this interruption of her dreamy speculations.

Walton was more smartly dressed than usual, and he was smiling as if there were no such thing as misfortune in the world. She could not help thinking of the earnest expression there would have been on Michael's face at a time of so much trouble to many worthy people and neighbours. The contrast was not favourable to her escort; but he was too full of pleasant recollections of his reception on the previous evening to note any delicate changes in her moods. He chatted away gaily as they walked up the street towards the grocer's shop at which she was to find Sarah, and was contented with very short responses to all the clever things he tried to say.

He was contented with himself, and that was reason enough for being oblivious to the discontent of others. He had made a sacrifice! And the sensation was so novel that he rather liked it. First, he had driven 'the Angel' into the town that day; second, she had asked him to accompany her in the afternoon to tea at the Vicarage, and he had pointblank refused. But presently they had encountered Miss Arnold. He was afraid of the Vicarage, as a place much too good for the likes of him; and he wanted to escape from his sister. Miss Arnold's appearance, however, settled the matter, and he was obliged to accept the invitation. Then virtue was rewarded. On entering the Vicarage he learned

that Polly was expected; that she was late, and that in her anxiety about the affairs of her friends at Marshstead she might have forgotten the appointment; therefore it would be necessary to send some one to seek her. Walton instantly volunteered to be the messenger, and was off before any objection could be made to his proposal.

All things had unexpectedly turned towards his gratification; hence his gaiety and blindness to Polly's very curt answers.

Sarah was waiting for her cousin, and her cheeks flushed slightly as she observed Walton. He was playful, and congratulated her upon looking so well; at which the flush deepened; but her manner was calm as usual. They walked together towards the church, he taking his place between the two girls, merry in thinking that he was still gaining favour in Polly's eyes before the beginning of that dreadful fortnight of separation. The merriment was heightened by the reflection that Miss Walton would be indignant at his conduct and full of meditations that would make her tea sour.

They turned into a green lane with sweet-smelling hedgerows on either side; the church and the Vicarage were just in front of them.

'I do feel such an inclination to go to church,' said Walton, laughing.

'How uncomfortable the sensation must be, then!' commented Polly, remembering how rarely he appeared in the family pew.

'You are forgetting the difference between the inclination to go and going,' he replied, not in the least disconcerted by her reminder of his backsliding. But it could scarcely be called backsliding, since there had never been any forward progress. 'If you would have me go, the parson must be there with the marriage service on the tip of his tongue, and we—just as we are now—must stand before him with the responses ready.'

'There would be one too many,' observed Sarah, without lifting her eyes.

'I didn't think of that,' he answered, with a quick side-glance at the hitherto silent lady, whose presence he had almost forgotten.

He was glad that they had reached the Vicarage gate, although a few minutes before he had been sorry to see it so near. Sarah did exercise some influence over him—it was like a jet of cold water playing on the spine, he thought; and he had felt it more frequently since that interview at the ford. But he always tried to forget anything disagreeable, and, as a rule, he succeeded.

They crossed the lawn; from the open window of the drawing-

room issued a soft murmur of voices, and when the new-comers entered they were welcomed by Miss Arnold and the Vicar.

Mr. Arnold had been the pastor of the Dunthorpe flock for about forty years; he had counted his seventy-fifth birthday, and he was 'not so strong as he used to be'—that was his phrase. He had a fresh complexion, long silky white hair, clean-shaven face, and soft eyes which sparkled with interest in all that concerned his flock, and with delight when he could help them by advice or sympathy, and in a material way, so far as his limited means would go. He still took his place in the pulpit on occasions, and the church was always crowded when it became known beforehand that he was to preach. But the principal work of the parish had been for some years past discharged by the curate, Mr. Holroyd.

The Vicar, finding that he could not stand the fatigue of riding about the country as of old, gradually submitted to an arrangement which Miss Arnold had made, namely, to have a few of the parishioners to tea on the afternoon of the market-days. Thus Mr. Arnold was gratified by the feeling that he was still in personal communion with his people, whilst he was saved from the physical exertion he would certainly have made otherwise; for, although one of the mildest and gentlest of men, he was one of the stubbornest in regard to any point of duty.

So the afternoon of the market-day always brought a number of matrons and maids to the Vicarage; few of the other sex attended, and those few were chiefly youths who had other attractions to the place besides the Vicar and tea. In the winter Mr. Arnold was always seated in his armchair by the fire, welcoming his visitors with a genial smile and kind words; in summer his chair was placed by the open French window, through which he would often step out to the garden to pluck a flower for some of his young friends, or to have a private conversation with some of the older ones.

Miss Arnold, whose sweet face carried sunlight into the darkest dwellings, had been born soon after her father had obtained the living of Dunthorpe, and circumstances had made her the nurse, the governess, and too soon she had to fill the place of her mother to eight sisters and brothers. She was recognised as an 'old maid;' and she only smiled at that most terrible of all the descriptions which can be given of a woman. But her graceful figure, always so simply yet so perfectly dressed, and her beautiful, sympathetic face made her appear still youthful in spite of the glimpses of silver in her hair. She was everybody's confidant, and yet all felt as if her interest were entirely concentrated in each individual. To the younger girls there was a delightful sense of

romantic awe, as they regarded the gentle lady, in thinking that she too had been blessed—or curst—with lovers; had even been ‘disappointed’ and yet survived! But the awe in no way affected their confidential communications.

She presided at the tea-table, and with old-fashioned courtesy filled the cups of the guests with her own hand. The occupation did not at all interfere with her conversation; she made no effort to speak, but she had the happy gift of always being able to touch some responsive chord in those around her which set them off gossiping on their own account. She was, in brief, a good listener, a kindly and keen observer of the humours of her friends, and always suggestive in her replies or questions.

The gathering was not such a successful one as usual on this day, for although only a few of those present felt any deep concern regarding the calamities entailed by the bank failure, all deemed themselves bound to look grave and to speak in whispers.

Miss Walton did not help to improve the occasion. Occupying a chair beside the Vicar, she sipped her tea with so much indifference that one might have fancied she had computed the price of it and found it very poor stuff indeed. Then she regarded the farmers’ wives and daughters with an air of condescension which they resented by ignoring her presence. She was in a very disagreeable position—that of a woman who had attempted to play the lady superior and failed. She was equal to the occasion, however; and finding that she was not estimated at her own value, she disdained any further attempt to conciliate the vulgar crowd, and gave her whole attention to the Vicar.

But even he deserted her as soon as Polly appeared. The young Mistress of the Meadow had been one of Mr. Arnold’s pets from her childhood, and, in addition, he was at present anxious to learn how far she was involved in the great failure. Consequently he took an early opportunity of stepping out to the lawn with her.

Walton would have liked to follow them, but, with an effort, he made another sacrifice and remained beside Miss Arnold. To her his words were addressed, but his thoughts and eyes followed Polly.

Sarah furtively watched him, and by some instinct Miss Walton’s attention was drawn to her.

‘This is abominably slow,’ Walton was thinking, whilst he was chatting with Miss Arnold and taking tea—for which he had a contempt—as if he regarded it as the most palatable of all beverages.

By and by the Vicar and Polly returned. Sarah and Miss Walton noted how quickly Tom revived from the languor which

had been creeping over him, and for an instant the eyes of the two women met.

It was somewhat slow this tea-meeting at the Vicarage; but Miss Walton, singular to say, was pleased by her entertainment. She had discovered an ally in the enemy's camp! It was a little hard in the presence of half a dozen pert farmers' daughters to find herself instantly deprived of Mr. Arnold's attention when Polly entered. She made a very fair show of yielding her place with grace; but nobody was deceived by her apparent courtesy, and a few were maliciously jubilant that she should be 'put out.' She made no effort to gain popularity amongst her inferiors—and they laughed at her.

'Since you are going to Marshstead,' the old Vicar said, laying his hand on Polly's shoulder with paternal affection, 'you will say to Mr. Hazell that I shall be over to see him to-morrow. We must hope that he is not seriously ill; but reverses of this kind are not easily borne when one is up in years.'

Polly and Sarah walked back to the village: the ostler of the 'Queen's Head' had been told to send the wagonette to meet them at the grocer's, where all their parcels were to be collected.

Miss Walton preferred to wait at the Vicarage until her brother should drive down for her. There was a twinkle in Tom's eyes as, in taking leave of Miss Arnold, he said he would be back soon.

When the wagonette drew up at the grocer's door Polly was surprised to see Walton, instead of the stableman, holding the reins.

'I am going to Marshstead, and I want you to give me a lift,' he said as he jumped down. 'I must see old Hazell—all his friends ought to call and show him that his losses make no difference to them.'

'But your sister is waiting for you,' exclaimed Polly, not knowing very well what to say to this strange proceeding.

'I have sent a man for her with a message,' was the prompt response, 'and I shall be really obliged if you will give me a seat in your trap. I shall only stay a few minutes with Hazell, and it is an easy walk from his place to the Abbey.'

He had his way: his impetuosity gave her no time to reflect; but even if there had been time she would have found it difficult to give a good reason why she should refuse him the ordinary civility of a seat when there was plenty of room in the vehicle.

The shopman had put the parcels in their places, and Sarah sprang into the seat behind without waiting for Walton, who stepped forward to assist her.

‘ You are accustomed to sit in front, I know,’ he said to Polly; ‘ but you will let me drive.’

She was laughing at the quick, decisive way in which he took everything into his own hands—including the reins—asking leave after he had taken possession, and they were off at a smart trot, before she had verbally sanctioned any of his movements. As they passed through the village he exchanged nods with several acquaintances; and Polly felt her cheeks become warm as she noted the expression of surprise on some of the faces, or the smirk which plainly said, ‘ Oh, that’s it, is it?’

Half an hour afterwards Miss Walton was being driven homeward by one of the ‘ Queen’s Head ’ men. She had preserved a perfectly smooth countenance at the Vicarage when informed that her brother had been unexpectedly called away to see a sick friend, and therefore found it necessary to send for her; but on the road her thoughts were not pleasant and her expression was not a pretty one.

CHAPTER XXII.

‘ WHAT IS WRONG?’

HAD she done anything wrong? Why was Sarah so horribly silent?

These questions were exercising Polly’s intellect severely, and spoiling her humour, whilst Walton chatted away merrily about horses, races, bets and betmakers. She certainly did her best to include Sarah in the conversation; but that lady made little effort in response. ‘ Yes,’ ‘ No,’ ‘ Perhaps,’ ‘ I cannot say,’ appeared to comprise her whole vocabulary. At length, with a feeling of some irritation, Polly left this reserved cousin to her own communings, and gave her attention entirely to the latest news about the forthcoming races.

By the time they had got two miles away from the village she felt that it was a mistake to have allowed Walton to accompany her, especially as he assumed the position of one who had taken care of her. Ten minutes after that she felt that it would have been a shame to have refused his request for a seat as far as Marshstead, and was inclined to think that his company was a good set-off against Sarah’s sulks.

Arrived at the farm, Michael came out to meet them. His first glance, full of light and pleasure, was directed towards Polly; but all the pleasure seemed to fade from his eyes when he saw Walton with the reins in his hand.

The change was so marked that Polly observed it at once; and

she was now convinced that in some way she had done something wrong. Setting her own feelings aside, however, she made the inquiry :

‘ How is Uncle Job ? ’

‘ Very much as usual,’ was the somewhat cold reply, as he assisted her to descend, and instantly turned to Sarah, who was already helping herself out.

Walton had exchanged a hasty greeting with Michael, and now stood at the horse’s head, patting its neck and talking to it in horse-language whilst waiting for someone to take it to the stable.

Polly, sensible of Michael’s coldness, stood on the doorstep an instant, hesitating, and glancing alternately at Michael and Sarah, and at Walton. Then she wheeled about and walked into the parlour. Michael’s desk was on the table, with a number of papers ranged around it, indicating that the owner had been interrupted in work by the arrival of the party. Job was not there ; and Polly was about to leave the room, when there entered a bright-eyed little woman, who, although she had seen her fiftieth birthday, was as active as if she were still in the heyday of youth. This was Jane Darby, who had come to Marshstead thirty-five years ago, and was regarded as one of the family. She was housekeeper, cook, and general superintendent of everything indoors. She had had ‘ offers,’ but she had chosen to remain Jane Darby. Her years had earned for her the title of ‘ Missus ;’ but Job and his son always called her Jane, and those intimate with them followed the example.

‘ I am glad to see you, Jane,’ exclaimed Polly, ‘ although this is such a sad time that one is almost ashamed to be glad about anything. But where is Uncle Job ? Surely he is not so ill as to be in bed ? ’

‘ Don’t believe he’d stay in bed so long as he could lift one foot past the other—not if all the doctors in the world told him to. Dr. Humphreys was here, and said he wouldn’t answer for his life if he didn’t keep quiet. “ I’ll live as long as you,” says the master, just laughing at him. “ All right,” says the Doctor—he is a good man, and never takes anything amiss—“ all the same, there would be no harm in making the most of the strength you’ve got.” “ And ain’t I doing that ? ” says master ; and then the Doctor and he had a chat together, and it did him a heap of good.’

‘ But did not the Doctor advise him to take some medicine ? ’

‘ Of course ! ’ (with innocent amazement at the idea of a doctor calling and *not* offering medicine). ‘ But master said he wouldn’t take it, and so they parted, the Doctor smiling almost as if he

thought master wasn't far wrong. "You will have to take care of yourself, mind," was the last words the Doctor spoke.'

'Then, where is uncle?' said Polly, returning to her original question.

'He's a queer man, miss, as you know,' said Darby, who even in her anxiety could not help smiling. 'As soon as the Doctor went away he took it into his head to go and cut down the hedge at the foot of the garden, because, he said, it shut out the view of the Meadow way. You can't tell how he thinks about you and Michael, miss; and I believe if anything will ever set him right after the upset he has had, it will be seeing you and Michael settled together; and a finer lad you couldn't find in all the country. I say it, who have known him since he was born.'

'I'll go out and see uncle,' said Polly abruptly.

'That's right,' said the sympathetic Darby; 'the sight of you will do him good. He is always better after you have been here.'

She followed Polly to the door, speaking; and they found one of the men leading the horse away to the stable. Michael, Walton, and Sarah had disappeared.

'They've gone round to the garden,' said the man, guessing at the meaning of Polly's look of astonishment.

He went on to the stable; Darby returned to her household duties; Polly walked hastily round the corner of the house and towards the foot of the long garden.

The sensation that there was something wrong grew upon her. She had come to try and give comfort to one in distress, and was feeling at this moment that she was very much in want of comfort herself. She had never pretended not to understand that her cousin Michael and Tom Walton were rivals for her favour. She was sorry for that, and still more sorry that circumstances should bring them so much into contact. She had told them both her mind as clearly as she was able to express it; and now she was sure that she was utterly indifferent to them both.

At the same time she felt annoyed with Michael. He must have known the object of her visit, and it was a very palpable slight that he should leave her to find her way to his father when and how she pleased, instead of waiting to accompany her. Then she repeated to herself that disagreeable question—had she done anything wrong? She could not find any satisfactory answer. She had been civil to Walton, she had been anxious to comfort Michael; and if the first act rendered the second impossible, she was too proud to ask for favour or to press her sympathy on anyone. She felt pained, vexed, and uncertain as to what she ought to do.

When she reached the party she found Sarah seated on a wheelbarrow, smelling a pink rose which had been plucked for her by Michael. The latter was speaking to his father, trying to dissuade him from cutting the hedge any lower, whilst Job worked on, slicing the branches away with vicious energy. Walton was standing under an apple-tree, lighting his pipe.

Polly laid her hand on Job's shoulder, and he turned towards her a haggard face. He smiled when he saw who it was, but the smile only rendered the expression more alarming.

'Oh, uncle,' cried she, grasping his arm, 'you ought not to be out here.'

He put her hand away, but very gently, and, resting upon the long shaft of his hedge-knife, he gazed vacantly in the direction of the Meadow.

'I almost fancy I see it, Polly; and you and Michael will be there together. Only a little bit more on this side, and then we'll have it in full view.'

He was about to resume his work, when Polly, grasping his arm, said softly:

'But you cannot get a view of the Meadow from here, uncle—and besides, I want supper, and I can't take it unless you come with me.'

Job dropped his hedge-knife on the ground, rested his hands on the top of the long shaft, and his chin on them. Then he surveyed the group with slowly dawning intelligence. He nodded to each good-naturedly; chuckled to himself, as if he were quite aware of the absurd ideas they had formed as to his condition. His eyes moved restlessly from one to the other whilst he appeared to speak only to Polly.

'I know what you mean, Polly. You think I am queer. Well—may be. You young people know so much more than your fathers and mothers that, mayhap, you know more than me. You think it, anyhow, and that's the same thing. Now, I tell you that, looking over there, I can see the Meadow, plain as ever I saw it from its own gate; and I can see you and Michael there, and the work going on and winning back all that we have lost.'

'I wish I could see as far as you,' said Walton: 'I'd give odds that you would see me a millionaire in no time.'

He spoke with his pipe in his mouth, and his hands were thrust into the side pockets of his coat. He had not the least intention of being impertinent; he was only thinking of the advantage such long vision would be to him in turf matters, and the fortune it would enable him to win.

Job turned his dull eyes upon him, and they brightened for an instant with a flash of spleen.

‘You’re a pretty lad, Tom Walton, but there ain’t the making of a millionaire in you—because you see too far.’

‘Is not that a paradox?’

‘Maybe, but it’s plain enough. There are people born who can never succeed, no matter how many fine chances they get—you are one of them. And there are people born who have no chances at all except what they make for themselves.’

He looked about, as if seeking some representative of the second class; glanced at Michael, who was gravely watching him, and then at Polly, who was evidently distressed by the conversation as well as by the mental weakness apparent in Job. He abruptly completed his sentence:

‘And Sarah is one of *them*.’

The idea of the cold, reserved, and silent girl who was sitting on the wheelbarrow being one of the gifted individuals capable of commanding circumstances made even Michael smile. Walton laughed outright. Polly spoke:

‘I believe you are right, uncle. Sarah is very quiet, but I don’t think there is anybody who can match her for making everything turn right. You should see her when the girls say they can’t get any butter! She just looks at the churns, and we have more butter than usual. Then as for eggs, where I find one she will discover a dozen after me.’

Polly was as delighted to sing her cousin’s praises as she was anxious to divert the mind of Uncle Job from unpleasant thoughts; but she was interrupted by Sarah.

‘I think you have made me vain enough for one evening,’ she said, lifting her dark eyes and smiling sadly; ‘I wish I could think half as well of myself as you want to make me believe you do.’

‘I hate make-believes,’ said Job emphatically as he turned again to the hedge.

But the stroke was feeble, and Michael took his arm.

‘We’ll go in to supper, dad; you can finish that in the morning.’

‘It ain’t supper-time yet.’

‘I told Jane to get it at once, as Mr. Walton has to leave us early.’

‘Well, give him his supper and let him go.’

‘But we are all hungry, and it will be pleasanter to sit down together.’

‘Maybe it would, and I do feel a bit peckish, though I’m not tired. Here, Polly, give me your arm.’

Polly's giving him her arm meant that he should rest on hers. Michael was about to help him on the other side, when Sarah stepped between.

'Let me do it,' she said softly. She had a particular dislike to be left to walk beside Walton.

The rivals were thus made companions for the distance between the hedge and the house; and although a similar thought was uppermost in both minds, neither referred to Polly. 'What are the odds against me now?' Walton was asking himself. 'Can she care for him?' was Michael's reflection. 'Would he still follow if he knew——?'

Job turned slowly with the two girls as his crutches. Polly was amazed by the gaiety of his manner. Knowing him as a man who was particular about pennies—she did not like to say even to herself that he was somewhat greedy—she began to think that surely there must have been some mistake regarding the extent of his losses; for, if they had been of much account, he would certainly have referred to them. There was, to be sure, a curious change in his manner which she could not understand; and she observed with a little pain that he would talk of nothing but her marriage with Michael. To him the event appeared to be inevitable and was to be celebrated very soon now.

'But they *do* keep putting it off so,' he complained irritably to Sarah. 'However, we'll just make them settle the affair soon now. Eh, won't we?'

'I hope so,' answered Sarah, with the only sign of gaiety she had yet displayed.

Polly turned away her head, pretending not to hear; but he shook her arm to attract attention and, chuckling, continued:

'Don't be shy, Polly. It must be, and soon. I can't hold out much longer, and you won't send me away without letting me see the thing I most want to see, and that's your wedding. I've been and told the tailor to make a new coat for me for the occasion, and I won't have it put off any longer.'

The fact that the new coat had been ordered appeared to Job to render further postponement of the marriage impossible. He gloated over this triumph of his ingenuity. She would have gone on shilly-shallying, maybe, for ever so long; and Michael was such an ass that he would have yielded to all her whims—but that new coat definitely settled the whole question.

Polly endured all this with remarkable patience; and her good-nature was tested all the more severely because Sarah agreed with everything that Job said, and went so far in her approval of his suggestions that for an instant Polly thought she was making fun

of him. A second glance at Sarah's face satisfied her that she was quite in earnest. She not only supported Job in his querulous insistence that the marriage should take place at once, but she hinted that it was Polly's duty to yield to an arrangement which her father had desired, and which Michael and his father were anxious to carry into effect.

'I must be a most dreadfully perverse creature,' said Polly, with a slight laugh, which was by no means so clear and merry as she could have wished it to be. 'Every girl is supposed to be in misery until she has a chance of getting married, and here am I with my two dearest friends insisting upon my marrying a man who I feel sure would make the kindest and truest of husbands, and yet I can't say that I will be good and do as I am told.'

This light way of treating the matter was unpleasant to her guardian; and to Sarah it suggested many disturbing thoughts.

'Of course it is a matter in which you have the best right to judge, according to your own feelings,' she said; 'but you should think of others as well as yourself.'

'I am trying to do that,' was Polly's quiet answer.

'Sensibly spoke, Polly, and we'll have the wedding as soon as you can get ready,' said Job, utterly unconscious of the altered tone which the cousins used in addressing each other.

Polly felt annoyed that Sarah should take part against her: she might at any rate have tried to say a word in her behalf, instead of taking up the same note as Job and insisting on the marriage. It was like a combination to persecute her, and she resented anything like an attempt to force her will. The persistent worry was becoming too much for her, and she felt that she could almost agree to marry anybody in order to escape from it. She maintained silence, however, being anxious to spare her guardian every annoyance which could be avoided in the mean while.

Job mistook her silence for acquiescence, and he relished his supper. He ate heartily, whilst he made sly allusions to great events that were soon to happen, nodding to Polly and winking to Sarah, as if he would say, 'You and I understand.'

Walton, too, was merry. He had apparently quite forgotten that he had only intended to remain a few minutes at Marshstead; and after supper he offered to play a game at draughts with Job. The latter looked at him with pleased surprise.

'You've heard that I play?' he said, flattered at this proof of his skill being talked about.

'Oh yes, often, and I know you are a good hand at it; but don't despise me altogether—I have beaten several London fellows who were counted first-rate players.'

‘I only play a penny a game,’ exclaimed Job, with a shade of alarm.

‘So much the better for me,’ was the reply; ‘I would be glad to play for love.’

‘Aha! thank you; there are only two who can play for that here.’

Job chuckled at his little joke; and by the time he had won three games and pocketed three pennies he had almost forgotten his dislike of Walton, and was coming to regard him as a very pleasant companion.

Polly in her ill-humour was becoming suspicious. She suspected that Walton delayed in order that he might claim the right to see her home. So, whilst he was in the middle of another game, she quietly slipped out and told Jane Darby to get the wagonette ready. When she rose to say good-night Walton was taken by surprise.

‘Allow me to see you home,’ he said awkwardly.

‘Thank you, it is not late, and we are driving,’ was the cold answer. ‘Besides, you have not finished your game, and I would not have uncle disappointed on any account.’

He was compelled to say good-bye, and to resume his seat opposite Job, whilst Michael went out to see them off.

‘That’s a point for him to score,’ thought Walton, as, with pretended contentment, he proceeded with the game. What he suffered he believed no tongue could tell, and, brooding over his wrongs, he became reckless of his play and Job the more ecstatic as he found how easily he could beat this man who had beaten great London players. The country-people have a way of affecting to despise the metropolis and to be horrified at its wickedness, but they calculate their successes by what is done in London.

Michael would have been pleased to avail himself of the unexpected opportunity to be Polly’s escort home. But she resolutely declined all escort—so resolutely, that he understood there was no use in repeating his offer. There was something in her manner which in another woman he would have called rudeness, but which in her he attributed to some temporary source of annoyance.

‘Very well, I shall be over to see you to-morrow.’

‘So much the better—I want to speak to you,’ she answered, as she drove away.

Throughout the evening his manner had been very ungracious to her. She knew that he had been observing her closely, and with an air of pity that made her feel more angry than the expression of any other sentiment on his part could have done. Job made matters worse by his persistent reference to the marriage which in

his eyes was inevitable and just about to take place ; and Sarah's treachery in joining the cry was almost more than she could bear.

She took the reins with a firm grasp, and her lips were tightly closed : she would let them all know that her wishes had to be consulted before the question as to a husband could be settled. She felt vicious, and yet ready to cry. She had been anxious to offer comfort where she believed there had been distress ; she found few signs of discomfort, and she had been subjected to a degree of persecution which caused her for the moment to think again that she would gladly marry anybody in order to escape from its repetition.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GATHERING EGGS.

SOUND sleep is an excellent antidote for ill-humour ; and if the sleep be followed by active exercise in the fresh air of a bright summer morning, it is a pitiful and a sickly nature which does not forget the evils of a previous day and rejoice in the pleasures of the present. A soft south wind, just strong enough to send a delicate ripple over the heads of the ripening grain, and yet brisk enough to make the cheeks glow with signs of healthy circulation, a clear-blue sky, a laughing chorus of birds, the lowing of cattle, the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, and the voices of ploughmen speaking to their teams, fill the atmosphere with exquisite sensations of life. The heart beats lightly, the feet are jubilant, and there is a delicious sense of pleasure throughout the whole system.

Polly had slept soundly ; she was therefore in a condition to enjoy the morning on going out to see the people set to work and to give Carter his instructions for the first part of the day. The haymaking was nearly over, but there were many matters to think about and arrange for, besides the live stock which is a constant care. There were still all the important duties of working fallows, of sowing turnips, of carting and spreading lime to be attended to. Then harvest was approaching, and there were many preparations necessary for it : the condition of the reaping machines and the rickyards had to be seen to, the arrangements about extra labourers had to be made, and the resident hands had to be set to work drawing straw for thatching, repairing here and renewing there ; and so there was little time to spare for mere amusement. Polly entered into all the business arrangements of the farm with the earnestness of one who delights in the work. The work was not labour but pleasure to her. At the same time

he was glad to see a few days of comparative leisure before her in which she could be idle without feeling that she was neglecting some duty.

So, on her way back to the house, as was her custom when she had time to spare before breakfast, she helped Sarah by looking for stray eggs. She peered under the hedges and into all the odd corners where she knew some of the perversely secretive hens were in the habit of trying to hide their eggs. Generally she was rewarded by getting her pockets and hands filled; but this morning she was very unsuccessful. However, she was determined not to be disappointed, and knowing that there were several favourite nests on the top of the straw in the barn she turned in that direction.

Although she scarcely owned it to herself, she was glad to have a little leisure to think about herself and other people. Of course the other people were chiefly Michael and Walton. One circumstance weighed very much in favour of the latter—he had made no allusion to her unceremonious return of his present. She never suspected that his silence was due to his normal dislike to allow anything to interfere with the pleasure of the moment. She had appeared glad to see him when he came; he was glad to be with her, and therefore he had no desire to disturb this agreeable state of affairs by seeking explanations which could not be of importance and might be productive of some harm.

A loud cackle, cackle, boding good fortune, greeted her as she entered the barn. When she began to climb the straw, which rose to within three feet of the roof, a couple of hens flew out with a cry [equivalent to a scream, but when they got outside they resumed the proud cackle of hens who feel they have done their duty.

Climbing a hill of straw is not such an easy business as ignorant persons would imagine; feet and hands slip in the most unaccountable way, and even Polly, with all her experience in such exercise, occasionally slid downward three paces for one she had made upward. But that was only fun, and when she did gain the top she saw through the artificial twilight of the place two nests with a fair store of eggs in each. She took off her hat, and after gathering the white and yellow treasures into it, she turned to make her descent. She partly stepped and partly glided; then just as she was near the floor she slipped, lost her hold of the straw, and went down much more rapidly than she had intended; but she held up the hat with the eggs and so kept them safe.

The awkward position in which she landed would have afforded much amusement to herself if she had been the sole observer of it;

but she felt something like dismay when she saw Michael Hazell standing in the doorway. The sensation of chagrin was very brief; she had too much common-sense to allow it to continue. There was an extra tinge of crimson on her cheeks, that was all. She sprang to her feet laughing merrily.

‘I wish you had not come just now, Michael; it is so ridiculous to see a woman tumbling down from a pile of straw.’

‘You can never appear ridiculous to me, Polly.’

‘Why, that is almost as pretty a compliment as your friend Walton would have paid me,’ she said, still laughing, and reckless in her desire to make him feel that she was perfectly at ease.

There had been light and passion in his eyes, but her answer suddenly transformed him into the thoughtful person who had vexed her the previous evening.

She noticed the change, and was aware of the cause: she had spoken of Walton. Well, why should she not speak of him? He was clever, good-looking, and certainly much more desirous of making himself agreeable than *some* people she knew. That was her pride which gave birth to these thoughts, and her better self was ashamed of them.

She took a very bold step, and one which might lead her into many difficulties. She spoke her mind, tenderly, as to one who had a place in her affections, but still with a pathetic firmness, showing that she reserved her own right to decide the future.

‘What is it that has come between us, Michael? I feel that you are not what you used to be to me, and you force me to say things which I do not mean—at any rate, you make me say things which I see are not pleasing to you, and yet you will not explain why you are so cold and so—I cannot put it in any other way than this—that you are so discontented with me.’

‘Is it of any consequence whether I am discontented or not?’

That was a mistake on his part, but he could not help it: Walton was so constantly on her lips, and therefore must be in her thoughts. He was surprised by the reply.

‘Yes, it is of consequence. We are no longer able to speak to each other as we used to do, and that pains me. You and your father have always been very dear to me. You are in trouble now, and you shut me out from your confidence in a way that makes me feel you no longer regard me as your sister. I have thought sometimes lately that you scarcely regard me as a friend.’

‘Oh, Polly, you know quite well——’

He stopped. He rested his elbow on the bar of a chaff-cutting machine while his eyes went hunting after something in every direction except that of her face. If he had only looked there he

would have seen bright eyes and flushed cheeks which would have given him comfort if they could not have given him satisfaction.

‘You know,’ he went on, with an effort to maintain a quiet business-like manner, although the tenderness of his voice betrayed much more than he suspected,—‘you know that you are more than a sister to me, and that you are as dear to my father as any of his own children.’

‘That is why I complain, Michael. If I am as dear to you both as you say, why do you shut me out from your confidence?’

‘If, Polly?’

‘Well, last night neither you nor Uncle Job said a word to me about what was in everybody’s mouth at the market—about your losses, that some said you could never get over.’

‘We have had losses,’ he said gravely, ‘but I believe we can pull through, and our harvest promises to be a good one.’

‘Then, why did you not speak?’

‘We could not very well do that in the presence of—others.’

‘I know what you mean; because Mr. Walton was with me. Well, surely if a friend asks me to give him a lift when he is going to the same place as myself, I may do so.’

‘Of course.’ (This somewhat coldly.)

‘That was the case last night. Mr. Walton was anxious to offer sympathy and to show his friendship, and because he happened to take the earliest opportunity that offered of going to Marshstead, you were unkind to him and unkind to me.’

‘I could not be unkind to you, and I would not be unkind to any friend of yours if I could help it; but I cannot pretend to be grateful for pretended sympathy—a sympathy assumed to serve his own purpose.’

‘Oh, Michael, I never heard you speak so distrustfully of anyone before, and I dislike it all the more because I know it is not just to him.’

‘Then you prefer to believe in him and to distrust me?’

‘You know that I do not prefer anything of the sort; but I will not hear a friend abused behind his back without saying it is not fair.’

‘That means he is your friend and I am unfair! I envy him. I am sorry to find myself out to be a backbiter. I beg your pardon and his; but I was only trying to explain why nothing was said last night, and certainly I did not intend to say anything unpleasant about your—about Mr. Walton. Besides, you must have seen how strange my father has become, and the doctor left a note warning me that I was to speak of nothing which might disturb him at present. *He does not know yet the whole extent of our loss.*

‘Then is it very heavy?’ she asked with anxious expression; ‘and will you not allow me to help you?’

Now was the time to plead his cause, and he knew it. He ought to have reminded her of the one way by which the difficulty could be most speedily removed and he and his father made happy. He ought to have said, ‘Marry me, and all will be well.’ But he would not take advantage of the position; he would always feel afterwards that she yielded to him out of pity, not love. That she did not love him at present in the way a woman ought to love the man she married was clear, at least to his eyes. Her firm defence of Walton was proof enough of that. The defence, too, hurt him in itself. Although a strong and honest-minded man, who would have given place calmly to a worthy rival, he could not do so in the present case.

If he should speak the words which were trembling on his lips, and if it should be, as it seemed, that her affection leaned most towards Walton, she would by and by blame him for concealing the truth and taking advantage of her anxiety to assist him in a time of trouble. So, unwisely, he did not speak the truth, because of his extreme desire that she should be free to choose her mate, and because of his equally extreme desire that she should make her choice before she learned anything about the sacrifice he was making on her account.

And yet the tenderness in her eyes and voice and look tempted him terribly.

‘Thank you, Polly,’ he said softly; ‘we shall be glad of your help, and I shall tell you when it is needed; but we scarcely know ourselves yet how far we are involved. A few weeks will make that known to us, and then I may ask you to come to the rescue.’

‘I will give up everything—for Uncle Job’s sake,’ she said warmly.

‘And for my sake?’

‘Oh, of course, I count you in with him.’

That settled whatever lingering doubt he might have had, and he went away without speaking the truth.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

JUNE 1879.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON THE BALANCE.

ONE of the drollest problems of human nature, and one for which our philosophy has not yet been able to find a satisfactory solution, is the facility for 'falling out' so frequently displayed by two friends whilst each feels and professes perfect confidence in the other, and is eager to render full justice, even at the cost of personal sacrifice. That was the position of Michael and Polly.

His aim was to be kind to her; her aim was to be kind to him. He wanted to protect her from every anxiety that all his means and skill could turn aside. She wished to comfort and help him; to make him feel that she so far identified herself with his father and with him that she regarded their losses as part of her own. If Michael had only yielded to the impulse he had discarded as selfish, and spoken out, who can tell what might have happened? Very likely she would have said 'Yes,' but the consent given with hesitation was what he could not accept under the circumstances. No, she must give herself to him with her whole heart, and freely, or not at all.

She was conscious of having been so nearly ready to yield anything he might ask, that she now felt irritated that he had asked nothing and had afforded her no opportunity of proving how earnest was her desire to be useful. He knew that she was not satisfied with him and he was very far from being satisfied with himself. A few words might have set them right, but the words were not spoken, and two people who were equally desirous to be good friends parted very much like enemies.

'He is unbearable,' was her thought as she entered the house,

and with impatient haste opened her desk determined to write and tell him her mind, or a bit of it at any rate.

Amongst the papers she saw the rosebud which he had flung from him on the day of their conversation in that room where he had first attempted to explain himself. It was a brown, shrivelled, withered-looking thing, although still retaining its perfume. She snatched it up as if about to throw it out at the window, just as she had done before, but she changed her mind and laid it down carefully in a corner as if it had been some precious sign of a dear memory. On the former occasion she had flung it into the desk as if half-ashamed of her own sentimentality; now there was a shade of sadness in her manner; the rosebud had acquired new meaning since it had been lying shut up in the desk.

She began the letter, not quite so savagely as she had intended; she even hesitated over the first sentence, but as she recalled the manner in which he had prevaricated and avoided the confidence she sought as if she had been a mere acquaintance who wished to pry into his affairs out of vulgar curiosity, she wrote with the velocity of indignation. Time seemed to be too short for her to say all that was in her mind. She plainly told him that his conduct was cruel, or she had placed far too high an estimate on the friendly relationship which she had always supposed to exist between them. If he had not told her that the Doctor had forbidden all conversation on the subject with Uncle Job, she would have gone to him and discovered all the details of the business. As it was, she was shut out from their confidence; she knew that there was something wrong, and she had to endure all the pain and suspense of brooding over evils which might be less but could not be greater than in her present uncertainty imagination conjured up. She repeated that it was cruel to her and she had not deserved such treatment.

She signed her name with a grand flourish, but did not prefix it with any courteous phrase, not even the meaningless 'Yours truly.' She did not pause to consider how much more was implied in the omission than in the commission of any of the conventional phrases. She addressed the envelope—so firmly!—and placed the letter in it. Then—she sat with her elbows resting on the desk; her fore-fingers forming pivots for the opposite corners of the letter, on which, by a touch of her little finger, she caused it to revolve. The flush had gone from her face, and she sat for a long time dreamily engaged in this droll occupation of twirling the letter between her hands.

Suddenly she tore the paper in two, and with vigorous haste began to shred it into small fragments. She was anxious to get it

disposed of before Sarah entered the room. She gathered up the fragments, and rolled them into a ball, and they grew into a kind of paper Frankenstein. She did not know how to get rid of them; there was no fire, and she would have made a mess if she had used a match to set them alight, which would have had to be explained to Sarah. She went into the kitchen, feeling very shamefaced as she invented messages for the two maidens in order to get them out of the way. As soon as they had gone she thrust the ball of torn paper into the fire, and pressed it well in amongst the blazing coals. If she had been burning a will she could not have felt more guilty.

‘What possesses you, Polly, to poke the fire in that way? Don’t you see you are spoiling it?’

It was Sarah who spoke in much amazement at her cousin’s conduct, for it was a very unusual occurrence to see Polly disturbing a good kitchen fire in the middle of summer.

‘It is not the fire, Sarah,’ she answered, her face reflecting the glare of the red-hot coal.

‘What is it, then?’

‘I wrote an angry letter to one who did not deserve it. I luckily changed my mind about it in time, and I am trying to burn it out of existence and out of my memory.’

With that she gave the fire one last vigorous stir, and left the kitchen. Sarah’s lips trembled a little as she gazed after her; of course the angry letter was to Walton, and it was about his going away. He did not deserve it! How she must love him!

This thing that he was doing, Michael believed to be right; it was a restitution, not a sacrifice. He was convinced that if the case had been presented in a court of law, the court would have decided exactly as he had done. Therefore, he argued, he saved a great deal of expense to both parties, and spared Polly many uncomfortable hours. Of course, she never would have thought of going to law, and consequently he was the more bound to see that she lost nothing. On these accounts he congratulated himself on performing an act of justice in the simplest and quickest manner possible.

Would he have done the same if it had been anyone but Polly who was involved? The question pulled him up sharply. After unpleasant reflections he would not deny that he *might* have been mean enough to shirk the responsibility of his present action if it had not been Polly who was concerned, but he hoped—he believed—that he would have done as he was doing now. Very likely she would some day learn the truth, and, maybe, scold him. But she *would have to own*, at any rate, that he had left her free to make

choice of a husband without being influenced by any thought of changed fortunes. She must own it, and she would understand. That was his strong point. How far the element of vanity inspired this faith he could not have told even if he had thought of it. All he knew was that according to his lights he was doing the best he could for her. If he could help it she should never know anything about what he had done—not even if she gave herself to Walton.

That she might do so, he thought not only possible but probable. Should the probability be realized, he would try to wish them good fortune, and to pass on his own way with as light a step as he might be enabled to use by the consciousness of having always thought of her happiness before his own. Yet amongst all these generous resolves, his heart was sore. He wished that he could avoid her altogether; then he might be more at ease; he might even acquire power over his own emotions. But there were so many things in which his aid was required that they were constantly brought together. Their quarrels were like those of brother and sister, of no permanent importance; and after one of them, they met again as if nothing had happened. Would it be so now?

As for Walton, he had been in the height of felicity on the afternoon of the market-day; and during the drive to Marshstead he would have given freely a hundred to one against the chances of Michael's success. During the evening, however, his opinion regarding the state of affairs became considerably modified; at the end he would not have been inclined to offer more than two to one on the event.

He glided rapidly from the position of a gay wooer who is so confident of success that he is ready to encounter all rivals, into that of one who feels himself rather badly used. Under the influence of this agreeable sensation his own value became much enhanced, and Polly's treatment of him appeared to be unkind, if not positively ungrateful.

Had he not on her account braved the combined wrath of the 'Sistern'? Had he not—almost—made up his mind to forswear horse-racing, betting, and all the other joys of his youth for her sake? And yet she treated him as if he had done nothing to prove how very much he was in love with her. Indeed, she had 'chaffed' him to a greater extent than he would have permitted anyone else to do. Well, he could resent this treatment and give up the chase as if he had never meant anything more than a *commonplace* flirtation. But then there were those interviews

with his family when he had too recklessly declared his readiness to marry the mistress of the Meadow if she would accept him.

‘No, that won’t do, either,’ was his instant reflection; ‘I can’t give her up now and be laughed at by the Angel and everybody else. . . . I ought to settle it, though, one way or other before I leave. I go, and the field is entirely open to Hazell. There is no saying what run of luck he may have in my absence.’

He might stay at home. The promise to go which he had given to his sister did not affect his decision on that point at all; he would have broken it without the slightest pricking of conscience. But a place had been reserved for him on the drag with which Sir Montague Lewis was to convey his young sporting friends to the races, and he could not make up his mind to lose the fun—not to mention that he had bets at stake which would keep him in a burning state of anxiety as to results. On the other hand, if by giving this advantage to the enemy he should lose Polly, he felt that the triumph which Miss Walton would find endless ways of showing—to say nothing of the commiseration and satisfaction of Misses Alice and Carry—would prove too much for him.

‘But I’ll take my chance and go,’ he said, with the air of a man who has resolved upon some noble act of self-sacrifice; ‘I can square matters when I come back.’

Why he should be better able to square matters on his return than before going he did not know. He never bothered himself with such details as ‘reasons’ for doing the thing which pleased him most at the moment. Amongst his sisters he affected to be making a great sacrifice of his own inclinations and convenience in order to please them.

Miss Walton was very complaisant because she had gained a fortnight—at least—in which to consider what ought to be done in order to rescue her dear brother from his infatuation. Alice was supercilious; she had not the slightest doubt that Tom was going away in order to gratify himself. But Carry was romantically inclined to regard her brother as a hero who had devoted himself in a spirit of pure self-sacrifice to the performance of some desperate enterprise, and she searched her short memory for some parallel to his conduct in that of the heroes of the last novels she had read. There was nothing equal to him, and she, magnifying the imaginary sacrifice he was making, began to pity him and to look upon her eldest sister as too exacting and too callous to the finer emotions. Why should he not marry Polly Holt? He might do worse, and very likely would.

Her cheeks were warmed slightly by the self-consciousness that she was interested in the question; for her name had been coupled

with that of Michael Hazell on several occasions. He was a very nice young man ; and although he had lately met with misfortune, he could still offer a comfortable home to his future wife ; and if he asked, she did not think that she could say, 'No.' Carry's sentiments were not deep, however, and the asking or the not asking would never unsettle her appetite. She could read and dream of true love crossed in all sorts of absurd ways, and find satisfaction in the pleasant knowledge that at any rate she had never been tried as these poor heroines had been. If she ever should come to suffer like them—well, she would act quite differently. She would not mope, and starve, and make herself miserable as a governess. She would marry the first sensible man that offered himself. If no sensible man appeared she would go and do something in the way of work. What that something might be she did not trouble herself to find out ; but took up her novel and became oblivious for the time to everything else.

Walton really did put himself under penance for once in a way ; but it was his injured pride which enabled him to endure. During the two days which intervened between his last meeting with Polly and his departure, he did not call at the Meadow. If she did not care for him he would not care for her ; and yet he longed to say good-bye. Who could tell but this brief parting might be productive of results fatal to his suit ? Those two days were the most uncomfortable that he had ever spent. He was not exactly unhappy, for he had his dogs and his horses to amuse him ; and his sisters, although in their different ways frequently very annoying to him, afforded some excitement to break the monotony of his existence. And there was the gratification of proving to Polly that he could do without her—for his vanity was great enough to interpret many little acts of ordinary courtesy into marks of special favour, and he believed she would feel hurt by his present reticence.

Still, he was uncomfortable. Now, he would go to her and have his doom pronounced at once, so that there might be no more hunting after a shadow ; and presently, he would not risk putting his fate to the proof so suddenly. Three or four times each day he found himself half-way to the Meadow, and turned back in a high state of irritability at these signs of weakness.

'I am an ass,' was the only definite conclusion he could arrive at.

It did occur to Polly, two or three times, as a peculiar circumstance, that Walton did not make his appearance before going away. He would have been chagrined to know that she felt very much obliged to him for his absence. She was worried by the persis-

tent chase after her, and she wanted time to rest and to think. She was in the most unhappy of all positions, that of not knowing her own mind, and she was eager to get out of it as soon as possible. The rosebud in the desk had almost settled the whole question for her; but she had put it away and turned to business with unusual energy in order to keep her nerves steady and her head clear.

The morning of the start from Elizabeth House for Newmarket was dull and foggy. The sky was darkened by many clouds through which flashed fitful gleams of sunshine, but they gave little promise of a fine day. Fair or foul, however, the party was to start, and punctually at half-past nine the drag with its team of four splendid bays, was brought to the gates. Walton and half-a-dozen other young fellows, sons of neighbouring proprietors and of London barristers or doctors, had breakfasted with the baronet and were ready to leap into the places which they had been invited to take. Sir Montague professed to be a first-class whip himself, and he believed his companions were almost equal to him; but on all these occasions he insisted upon having his own coachman to drive, as it left the party quite free to enjoy themselves.

He took his place in front, and they started amidst a steady drizzling rain and the cheers of a crowd of village children who had gathered to see the start. Walton was the gayest of all, in spite of the rain.

CHAPTER XXV.

BEGINNING HARVEST.

WHEN Walton had gone away without making any sign, Michael remained the same calm, faithful friend as ever, but an unconfiding one as Polly thought. For the first time in her life she became conscious of a sense of dulness in the routine of her duties. She had not suspected until now how much excitement there had been in the affairs of the last month or so, giving spice to her daily life. In the calm between the close of the busy time of haymaking and the beginning of the still busier time of harvest she was obliged to own that she regretted the absence of Walton.

The old ways in which she had grown up were mysteriously changed. Uncle Job was quite different from what he used to be. Michael was always so gentle that his friendship did not afford her half so much pleasure as when he had occasionally scolded her. Formerly he would have resolutely forbidden her to act when he believed she was making a mistake, and she would yield. Now, he would only explain to her at what point she was likely to err,

and then leave her entirely to her own devices. He would not argue or insist as he used to do: he left the whole responsibility of action upon herself; and sometimes out of pure vexation at this inexplicable, and, what was worse, inexpressible change, she would not yield. In the end she was generally obliged to own that he had been right.

One of her latest crotchets was a very good one, but it threatened to leave her without anything like a sufficient number of hands for the harvest. In engaging the harvesters she declared her resolution not to give beer in the field, but to pay the equivalent in money at the end of each week. Polly was a great favourite throughout the district: anyone who had been in her service was sure of assistance in a time of trouble. What she had done for the labourers and their wives was not to be measured by money; many a time in cases of illness she had risked the danger of infection and acted as nurse—fever, and even small-pox, having no terrors for her.

Her own people, therefore, were ready to stand by her in anything she might do, but even they were staggered by this daring innovation; and the greater number of the harvesters being strangers, her proposal was rejected. She was inclined to insist, and that only made matters worse, for the agricultural agitators were at this time rousing dissension between farmers and labourers, and there was discontent throughout the land. The discovery was suddenly made by the latter that they had been long-suffering and ill-used beings. 'Unions' were being formed everywhere, and the scale of wages was to be regulated by them and not by the employers.

The mistress of the Meadow had been always ready to give the highest wages she could afford, and consequently had not yet been much affected by the general disturbance. But on this matter of beer she was obstinate, and ran the risk of being left with only her own people to do the harvest work. Michael was conciliatory. He advised that the arrangement should be made optional, and at length she submitted. Then she was pleasantly surprised to find that by far the greater proportion of the men and women who had refused to be coerced into the arrangement agreed to accept the money instead of the beer.

'That is sensible,' said Polly to old Carter, who had been deputed to announce the decision of the harvesters. 'I never had a dispute with any of them before, and I am glad that this one has been so easily settled. I believe the new arrangement will be better for yourselves and for me.'

She was standing at the foot of the wooden steps leading to

the door of the store-loft. The building was of wood, thickly coated with tar which glistened in the sunlight. The underpart was used as a tool-house and receptacle of miscellaneous lumber and had a separate door on one side of the steps. She had been about to ascend to the loft when Carter approached, his face beaming with satisfaction at the intelligence he had to communicate.

‘Not a doubt of it, Missus,’ he said cheerily, ‘and we’re all glad that there’s an end of the matter, for we was mortal vexed that there should have been anything wrong between you and us. But you see times has changed and people want a bit of their own way. I’m not saying but they sometimes want too much of their own way.’

‘They ought to have as much as they like, so long as they don’t interfere with other people’s way.’

‘That’s just what them as didn’t know you, Missus, thought you wanted to do,’ answered Carter honestly, but with an apologetic grin for speaking so boldly.

‘Perhaps they are right, Carter; but they will find at the end of harvest that those who have taken the money have the best of it, and they will own then that I was right. However, they cannot say I am interfering now.’

Her proposal had been made entirely with a view to the benefit of the people themselves, and she was glad to find it adopted under any modifications. It was Mr. Holroyd, the young curate, who had made the suggestion. He was full of enthusiasm in all matters of moral and sanitary reform, and was constantly discovering something to be improved or abolished. His activity in this respect pleased a few, amused others, and annoyed a great many who wished to be left to the enjoyment of the customs and things which had served them quite well until this young fellow came amongst them.

Polly was one of the few who regarded the proposal to give money instead of beer to the labourers as a great improvement on the old system, and she had made an attempt to carry it into practice. She had succeeded to a certain extent; but the success was not so complete as to impress her with the idea that she was born to be a reformer.

‘Why can’t they see it?’ she said to Michael, still wondering at the obtuseness of her subjects.

‘Because the points of view are different. They look on the supply of beer, not as part of their wages, but as an old-established privilege; and there are many better informed people than our labourers who prefer a privilege to any compensation in money. *But you have done a good thing for them in giving them their*

choice, and the best thing for yourself at the same time. You could never have forced them to take your view of the matter, but they will soon come to understand the value of the arrangement when they see it in practice amongst their friends. I have made the same agreement with our people at Marshstead; and I believe Tyler has done so, too, at the Brook.'

It was a satisfaction to know that two at least of her neighbours were carrying out the same plan as herself, and on the day on which operations were to begin she went out with a merry heart to meet the harvesters.

It was early morning, the air full of bird-music, the sky so clear that there were no shadows cast upon the fields of golden grain which rippled and glanced merrily in the sunlight as if nature rejoiced in the bounteous store to be gathered in.

At the top of the home-field Polly met the group of men and women, all bright and smiling, and dressed with more than usual neatness, as if they were bent on a holiday rather than a hard day's work. There was a sharp rasping of scythes, and the party attached to the reaping machine were taking a last survey of the gear to make sure that every part was in good going order.

But all turned to the Mistress when she appeared amongst them. She gave them kindly greetings and they responded with hearty wishes for a goodly ingathering, congratulating her upon the rich promise made by the appearance of the crops. The exhilaration of the morning air stirred the blood and made all eager to begin the great work of the year.

Polly took a reaping hook, and, whilst the others looked on, cut the first sheaf; deftly she platted two lengths of straw together, bound the sheaf neatly, and placed it on end.

Then there was a ringing cheer; the scythes flashed and swished through the ripe grain as the reapers, followed by the gatherers and binders, fell into their places. The reaping machine was driven through a gap in the hedge to the next field where it was to be employed. A hum of voices and sounds of merry laughter now joined in the chorus of the birds, and harvest had begun.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULD NOT.

'It is more than five weeks since Mr. Walton left home,' said Sarah, her knitting needles working in and out dexterously, and swiftly transforming a ball of wool into a stocking.

The observation was made suddenly, but it was the outcome of a long train of reflections.



'Polly took a reaping-hook, and cut the first sheaf.'

‘Is it?’ said Polly, yawning. ‘We have got on very well without him.’

She looked up from her book as if she would be glad to exchange reading for conversation. They had been sitting together for a long time in silence—a habit lately more marked than usual—and the twilight was so rapidly fading into darkness that Polly had been straining her eyes during the last ten minutes to make out the printed words. She was sitting with her back to the window, and on raising her eyes she encountered a quick inquisitive glance from Sarah’s. The latter:

‘You have not missed him much, apparently.’

‘Why should I miss him or anybody when there was so much work on hand?’

‘I thought you would have missed him. He was only to be away a fortnight.’

There was a faint indication as of shortness of breath in the quick, nervous manner of her speech.

‘Well, I suppose he has been enjoying himself in his own way. Where did he go to?’

‘You know he went to Newmarket, and then to London; then he went to the Goodwood and back to London, and nothing has been heard of him since.’

‘You seem to know all about his movements; has he written to you?’

‘No. I saw his sister yesterday, and she told me this. At the same time she wished me to ask if he had written to you, as they are getting anxious about him.’

Polly thought herself lucky that her back was towards the window, otherwise Sarah could not have failed to observe the flush which came to her cheek. But Sarah did observe it, in spite of Polly’s position and the rapidly deepening shadows; and she became pale.

Walton had written to her twice; she had not answered the letters, but she intended to do so, and had been meditating night and day what her answer was to be. There was a pause. In that dim light Polly felt better able to speak in confidence to her cousin than she had done for some weeks past. And so, quite gravely, she said:

‘Yes, he has written, Sarah, and I have not replied, because I do not know what to say to him, and I would rather not answer him at all.’

‘What is the difficulty?’

The knitting needles seemed to fly, and what little light there

was seemed to flash from them. Polly laid her book on the table, pushed the chair back, got up, and began to pace the room.

‘The difficulty is that I don’t know what to say,’ she replied, by-and-by. ‘He wants me to marry him: I like him very much, but I don’t think I like him well enough at present to do that.’

She was talking more to herself than replying to her cousin. She was utterly unconscious of the pain which those quickly moving needles expressed.

‘He does seem to like me, and says he would do anything for my sake,’ she went on, still speaking as if to herself. ‘Now, it would not be fair of me to say yes or no, until I felt quite sure whether or not I was ready to give up everything for him. Would it?’

‘No!’ with emphasis; then in a lower tone, ‘but do you think he would give up everything for you?’

‘He says so.’

‘Would he give up races and betting, for instance?’

‘He says that he will never attend another race or make another bet if I will say yes; but that if I say no, he will go as fast as he can to——’

‘The devil! that’s where he is going to, at any rate, and as we are alone you might just as well say it outright. Do you believe in his promises?’

‘No—at least, not without a good many grains of salt.’

‘Then tell him so, and that will answer him. You cannot hesitate if you do not believe in his promises.’

‘I am not quite prepared to say that I do not believe in them, for I think he would *try* to keep them.’

‘And you know he would fail.’

Polly halted at the window. The trees were forming into dense black masses, with here and there a glimpse of light like the eyes of wood-gnomes peering out in search of the first opportunity to begin their pranks; and the headlines, touching the sky where the last reflection of the setting sun still lingered, formed into curious shapes of faces, towers and spires, and serpentine convolutions, to which the imagination would give form, according to what was uppermost in the mind. The sweet stillness of the scene and hour might have soothed the most distracted brain. And through this calm scene the shadow of Michael Hazell passed more than once; but it was so distant that she was only faintly conscious of its presence. She was thinking about Tom Walton.

‘Yes, he would fail,’ she said at length, as if unaware that

there had been any lapse of time between Sarah's remark and the response.

'What would you do then?'

'I don't know what I might do; and it's just the fear of that which makes me uncomfortable and unable to make up my mind.'

'I can tell what you would do: there would be a quarrel and a separation. By-and-by, you would make it up, and you would go on more or less smoothly together until the next quarrel and separation: and so you would go on to the end, both of you discontented and miserable.'

'If I cared enough for him, I think he might be kept straight—but I don't. . . . What ought I to do?'

'If you asked my advice with any intention of being guided by it, I could answer.'

'I would rather have your advice than that of anyone else on this matter; and I would be guided by it—if I felt that you were right.'

'Ah, that is an important condition—but all counsel is subject to it. The only advice anybody takes is that which chimes in with one's own humour. I will tell you what I would do—I would leave him to the woman who cares enough for him to risk her happiness on the chance of keeping him straight; and who, failing in that, would still be faithful to him when he sank into the worst state of poverty.'

There was energetic earnestness in the voice, indicating that the words sprang from the depths of her heart. Polly did not observe that. She sat down by the window, resting her elbow on the ledge and watching the droll outlines of the trees and gathering clouds, ever changing as the light faded.

'Is there such a woman?'

'I believe there is.'

'Where?'

'He will find her. I told you once that he would never marry you even if you were willing to take him; and I said that because I know the woman who would sacrifice everything for him exists. Leave him alone, Polly, for his sake as well as your own. Or, if you still doubt what you ought to do, try him; say that you are as poor as I am, and watch how quickly his ardour will cool.'

Polly opened her eyes and her mouth too at this strange sally; the suggestion was equally degrading to her and to the man. She did not like it, and she spoke with some symptoms of rising temper.

'Do you know what you are saying, Sarah? Do you think he cares for me only for what I have, and not for what I am?'

‘I say, try him,’ was the dogged response, but there was an implied sneer in the words and tone which made Polly feel very hot.

‘How could that be done without marrying him?’

‘Easily. Tell him that you have been more seriously involved in the bank failure than you had at first supposed, and that you have scarcely enough left to keep the farm going without the aid of others. Tell him that, and see what will happen.’

‘How could I tell him such a lie?’ was the impatient exclamation, for the idea that she was dependent on others in order to carry on the farm was irritating in the extreme, even as a mere fancy.

‘You wanted to test him,’ answered Sarah, with sudden coldness, ‘and yet you are afraid.’

‘I am not afraid, but he would be as ridiculous as you are in proposing such a thing if he did not at once see that I was making fun of him. He would not believe it, and he would laugh at me.’

‘I will undertake that he shall believe it, and that he shall not laugh at you.’

But Polly laughed. Her cousin’s vehement persistence contrasted so comically—as she thought—with the absurdity of the proposed test, that it restored her good humour.

‘Very well, I will show you that advice can be taken although its wisdom is doubted. I will try him as soon as he comes back. I will dress myself in one of Dame Carter’s dowdy gowns and say to him, “Please, sir, I was rich and I find myself now very poor. Do you still wish me to be mistress of Walton Abbey?” But, mind, I don’t promise to accept him even if he should say yes.’

‘What, not if you knew that he believed you?’

‘I doubt if I could ever bring myself to think that he did so. But there is fun in the frolic, and I shall try to look as woe-begone as possible. Then, when he tells me that he is not to be taken in by such nonsense, I will tell him who was the inventor of the trick.’

Sarah moved uneasily in her chair, and groped about in the darkness for her worsted. Polly lit the lamp. Although she had at first scouted the idea of this scheme, she was presently interested in imagining all sorts of droll incidents which would attend its development, and was delighted by the prospect of a harmless practical joke. Even her sad cousin might enjoy a laugh at the performance, for she was quite resolved to play the part of the *beggar-maiden* to perfection.

Sarah was the last to go to bed, and as she went about, candle in hand, examining bolts and bars, she was like one walking in sleep. Every movement was measured and mechanical; the step was slow, and the eyes were always fixed on something far away. The white face, made almost ghastly by the flickering glare of the candle and the moving shadows on the walls, was expressionless. As she ascended the stairs she seemed to pause on every step. On every step she was asking herself a bitter question: 'What am I doing?' On every step she answered the question: 'It is for her good, as much as my own—ay, more than my own. It is not wrong, it is right I am doing, and she will be grateful to me by-and-by; and he will be grateful——'

But there the thought found utterance in a broken sob; for she feared that he, instead of being grateful, might scorn her for what she was doing. Then faintly the words 'God help me!' were spoken by somebody; she knew that they were only echoes in her brain, and yet they seemed to be spoken by somebody who pitied her. She pitied herself.

The light fell on Polly's door, which was partly open. The door faced that of Sarah's room. Sarah hesitated a minute, and then went into her cousin's bedroom.

'Are you sleeping, Polly?'

The calm, regular breathing of one in healthy sleep was the only answer. Sarah went quietly out, and the moment of confidence was lost. She was in the mood then to have laid bare her heart; to have uttered the cry which she had so long pent that it seemed now about to burst bounds, and in doing so, kill her. If Polly had only been awake, how gladly she would have told her everything!

She entered her own room and fastened the door. In one corner there were four brown japanned tin boxes, fitted with Bramah locks, and like those which are piled up in the rooms of solicitors: the name of a person or a property was printed on the front of each. They were deed boxes which had belonged to her father; but the deeds, wills, and other legal documents had been duly delivered to their owners; and they now contained the private papers and letter-books of the late Robert Hodsoll. These she had preserved at the break-up of her father's establishment lest information should be required from them at some future time by any of the clients whose affairs were mentioned in them. She was herself the first who had required assistance from those records of past passions and past follies.

Night after night during the last month, when she was supposed to be in bed, she was busy examining the papers and letter-

books with eager eyes that were strained as much by excitement as by the effort to decipher the frequently indistinct lines by the aid of a single candle. The task was a long one, but she never wearied; page after page was scanned with that slow obstinacy which generally attains success. Often her eyes ached, and her body, too; she rested a moment and then resumed her search. At length—a week before the conversation of this night—she found what she wanted. In one of the letter-books was an exact account of the disposal of all old Holt's money. She placed that volume on the top of the others; an old envelope marked the place in the book, and she now knew almost as much as Michael or Job Hazell as to Polly's financial position.

She had gloated over the cold, precise statement of affairs as if she had found in it a treasure beyond all price. In the first flush of triumph she felt like one who, having been badly used, has become suddenly endowed with the means of retaliation, and is determined to use them. But she wanted to be just to her cousin; she wanted to be just to Walton. He had caused her much suffering, but she would not take undue revenge, and so in the course of six anxious days and nights of reflection her discovery gradually dwindled in value. It was in her power to make Walton's selfish nature smart keenly by letting him know that the greater part of Polly's wealth depended upon the good will of Job Hazell; but in doing so she would hurt Polly too, and Michael more than either. Besides, was Walton after all so base as to think only of the money? She was full of bitterness in all her thoughts of him; she said to herself many times that she hated him; and yet she could not always feel satisfied that he was so contemptible as that. Hence a difficulty in deciding how to act.

For some time she believed that Polly's heart was given to Michael; if she had remained certain of that she would have known what to do. But everything recently had tended to show that Polly was wavering, and Sarah's jealous eyes magnified trifles into proofs of the truth of this conclusion. Polly's confession removed all doubt. Then she had hit on the plan of making Polly herself test Walton, without letting her know that it was at Michael's cost she remained an heiress. Whatever the result might be, it would be good for all of them.

With this specious sophistry she soothed her conscience, and determined that her action was just.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JOB'S WILL.

EVERYTHING appeared to have fallen into its normal routine during Walton's absence. It seemed as if some disturbing element had been removed from the place, and the atmosphere had been cleared. Michael resumed his old place as general adviser at the Meadow. The harvest work progressed rapidly and satisfactorily; the sun shone, the sky was bright and calm. Polly's life was full of business and of the serenity inspired by the sense that all things were going well.

There were two shadows, however, crossing the brightness of these days. Sarah's health was evidently failing, yet she would neither consult the doctor nor own that there was anything the matter with her. The second and more important shadow was made by the increasing eccentricity of Uncle Job, and his impatience at the delay of the marriage which in his mind had become a fixed event. It was dangerous as well as useless to contradict him; and so, to his persistent inquiries evasive answers had to be given by Polly as well as Michael—an unpleasant task for both.

When the harvest began, Job was the first in the field, the first to begin the work of the day, and the last to leave off. He insisted on doing a full day's work, on sharing the simple fare provided for the harvesters, and at the end of the week he demanded his pay like the others. Often his strength would fail, and Michael, who was always watching him with sad eyes, would offer to complete the task for him. Then Job would turn to him angrily:

'Go do your own work, and leave me to mine. You know that I am as poor as any of those people who call me master, and we want all the hands we can use ourselves to save us from being turned out of the farm. Go and do your own share; you must do it, if we are to live honest and pay our debts.'

'All right, dad.'

'It ain't all right till we are out of the wood, and the end is a long bit away yet.' And Job would rise up from the sheaf he had been binding, to wipe the perspiration from his wrinkled brow.

'We'll do our best, anyhow,' was the cheery answer, as Michael stooped, bound up the sheaf, and placed it on end beside two others.

'It does me good to hear you speak that way, lad. We'll manage to pull through, I dare say; but we must work hard.'

‘And we are working hard. Why, you are almost equal to the youngest fellows in the field.’ Saying this, Michael was going on steadily with the work his father was eager to accomplish.

‘Ah, I was a good hand in my time, Michael. They used to say there wasn’t a scythesman in the two counties could cut one acre for my two. But I’m getting old and stiff, not what I used to be at all. And it is a hard thing when you have earned rest, to have to turn to again and work, just as though you had done nothing all your days. But work is comforting. When I’m binding up a sheaf, or get a scythe in my hand, I seem to forget about that fool’s business I got into and that swindling bank—for it was a swindle, and a darned swindle. . . . But I do miss your mother, lad; more nor ever since this happened.’

He glanced round vaguely as if seeking her; then with a sigh he pushed Michael aside and resumed the work himself.

‘Maybe, it ain’t a misfortune after all; only a living of my youth over again. I try to think so, but I can’t do it when I’m idle.’

The restless activity of his brain only found relief when his hands were busy and he was able to imagine himself restoring the fallen fortunes of Marshstead.

Scenes like this became more and more frequent. The son was always patiently watching, ready to help at any moment without appearing to interfere or to suggest that his assistance was necessary. We are led by our humours as much as by our reason when at its best; and so Michael endeavoured to make his father feel that everything he did was of great value to the farm and would soon make them as rich as if they had never lost anything.

Michael saw not only the failing of his father’s intellect but the rapid breaking up of his physical condition, and all his affectionate care was powerless to check the decay. ‘That is the most terrible of all the trials of human nature and human strength—to be obliged to stand by and see the being we love slowly passing from us, and to feel our own utter helplessness. Such an experience enables us to understand how merciful Death is when he strikes only one prompt blow.’

By-and-by Job was unable to rise from his chair, and he fretted greatly that a young man like him should have lost the power of his limbs when the harvest was going on and he had so much to do. He found some solace in giving his querulous orders as to the work to be done. Michael attended punctually every morning to receive his commands, and at meals and in the evening duly reported progress. This gratified the old man and satisfied him that, although a prisoner in the house, he was still an active element in the business of the farm.

When he was taken out to the garden he always had his seat placed so that he could see the part of the hedge which he had last pruned. Resting his hands on his thick staff and his chin on them, he would look over the golden fields towards the Meadow, and he still imagined that he could see the roof of Polly's house amongst the trees in the distance. Turning his head a little to the right he commanded a view of the outbuildings of his own farm and of the stacks of grain which were rapidly increasing in number as the harvest work went on. The latter scene afforded him special joy, and nodding his head as he counted each stack and calculated its value again and again, he would say :

‘Not bad, Michael, not bad at all. If we had only two or three years like this we could soon make way.’

Then he would sit silent for a long time, but never quite still : with quick, short movements of the head he glanced from the hedge to the yard, and it would have been difficult to say in which direction his eyes lingered longest. While he sat thus, Michael would sometimes read the newspaper to him : he paid no heed to anything except the prices of cattle and grain. One day his interest even in this subject did not hold his attention.

‘Oats were in better demand,’ read Michael, ‘but barley was depressed. The supply of wheat was short, and trade in——’

‘I want to see Patchett,’ interrupted Job.

‘What do you want him for, dad?’ inquired the son, folding the paper.

‘To make my will.’

‘Why, you did that only a few weeks ago, and you cannot want to alter it already.’

‘I want to see Patchett,’ was the obstinate retort.

‘Very well, I’ll tell him when I go to the market.’

‘You must go to-morrow, or I’ll send somebody else for him.’

Michael said ‘Very well’ again, believing that by the morning his father would have forgotten his desire to see the attorney. He frequently made requests which he entirely forgot in a few minutes. But it was not so with this request, for he reiterated it at intervals until there was something painfully monotonous in the sound—

‘I want to see Patchett.’

Michael was anxious—not on his own account—that there should be no alteration in the last will ; but at length he felt that he must go to the lawyer. That gentleman listened to his grave explanations about his father's condition and desire to see him, without appearing to regard the matter as of much consequence.

Don't trouble yourself about his anxiety to make a new will.

That's a common feeling when one is in a weak state and there is something to leave, and sometimes when there is nothing to leave. I have often made half-a-dozen wills within a week for a man. I must see your father, of course.'

'He will not be contented until you do.'

'Very well; and do you still desire the will to stand in its present form?'

'Yes; any alteration would only cause unnecessary annoyance to Miss Holt and to me, without making any difference in my determination that the money is to be paid to her.'

The lawyer's eyes rested on him for an instant with something like the expression of one who sees a strange animal. Mr. Patchett was very fat, jovial, and easy-going in his manners. He had thin fair hair, pale blue eyes, and a soft round face, the habitual expression of which was that of the most innocent good nature. His geniality and his songs made him a favourite at all the farmers' gatherings; in his practice he was known to be one of the acutest of attorneys.

'You know your own business best, Hazell,' he said, after a momentary pause. 'You can tell your father to expect me at twelve to-morrow, and you ought to be there too.'

'He will not allow me to be present. But you know my wishes, Mr. Patchett, and I depend on you to do what may be done to prevent any alteration of the will.'

Precisely what Michael had feared took place. By much argument and entreaty he had prevailed on his father to omit from the will, which was now to be altered, any mention of the sacrifice they were making to keep Polly's patrimony intact. In the new will, although there was to be no alteration in the disposal of the money, Job insisted upon inserting a full statement of all his transactions with Holt—how the bank stock had been transferred to him absolutely, with only an informal private agreement that he should restore all to Polly when she married Michael, or some one else who should be fortunate enough to win Job Hazell's approval.

'I have already told you,' said Patchett, 'that you are not bound to restore this money. It was her father who made the investment.'

'It don't matter about that, for you see, as they are going to be married soon, it will all come into the right hands in the end. But they have been shuffling and putting off the marriage so that I couldn't rest without making the whole business clear if so be that I am gone before the wedding day comes. Then if anything goes *wrong* she'll know what her father wanted and what I wanted.'

The lawyer was obliged to take his instructions, and when Michael learned their nature, he resolved that Polly should never know the contents of the will.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FROLIC.

SURELY this was a very wicked hoax that she had pledged herself to play upon Walton. Polly had always been ready to take part in a joke, and she was ready enough for this one, notwithstanding her conviction that he would at once see through the flimsy scheme. Then he would join in the laugh, or he would try to make fun of her. It would be good sport, however, if she could persuade him for a moment that she was really ruined, to watch the effect upon him, and to see his astonishment when the announcement was made that it was all a jest and she was in exactly the same position as before. Should he hesitate, she would dismiss the faithless swain and bid him never speak to her any more. If it had only been his eldest sister who was to be the victim of the prank she would have entered into it with more relish.

There was one drawback to the prospective amusement; it was a little too personal. It was like confessing that she thought him a fool, or that she was a fool herself and had adopted this poor trick with the notion of sounding the depths of his devotion—as if they could be sounded by such means if there were any depth at all. In that view she rather hesitated; and it became daily more clear to her that if she had loved him she never would have dared to enter into such a frolic.

At length it became known that Walton had returned. His prolonged absence—and that at harvest time, too—had been remarked by everybody. Walton was of the utmost value to the district in one way—he afforded inexhaustible material for that kind of evergreen gossip which is repeated and listened to with an air of pitying interest. He had been attending races everywhere and he had been gambling desperately; so much was agreed upon by all; but there was a considerable divergence of opinion as to whether he had lost every farthing that Walton Abbey could pay and more, or had come back with a pot of money. As both versions of his adventures were related upon the best authority there was no lack of discussion as to which was right, and consequently restless tongues were supplied with plenty of occupation.

Polly enjoyed many a quiet laugh at what was in store for him

as she walked about the fields, surveying the work and exchanging remarks with the men and women who were toiling in the yellow heat of the day. The matter was frequently in her mind, but it did not interfere with the business or pleasure of the moment.

Although she had not answered his letters, there was no doubt he would make his appearance soon after his arrival—if he did not, so much the better. He did not, and she began to wonder. Several times in the field she caught herself looking quickly round when there was the sound of a footstep behind her. On the first occasion she saw Toby Carter carrying a can of water and an earthenware mug to the thirsty harvesters; on the second, it was only a girl gleaning.

The next time, it was the dull thud of a horse's hoofs galloping over the stubble which attracted her attention, and Walton, Jim, and Bones were beside her. He flung himself out of the saddle almost before the horse stopped, and having slung the bridle over his left arm, he shook her hand warmly. Bones sat down at the horse's head as he had been taught to do.

This was not the way in which she had intended to meet him; she was to be looking very pale and depressed, not flushed with healthy exercise and contented with all her surroundings. But she was taken by surprise and had no time to assume the air of melancholy she had intended for his benefit. In the hurried interchange of the usual commonplaces she could not be much less cordial than he was, and indeed forgot her part in a most reprehensible manner, although she had rehearsed it frequently to herself during the last few days.

‘Sarah told me I would find you here, and how well you look!’

There was another blow to the scheme, and she felt almost too much inclined to laugh at being so caught to be able to proceed. But she had the satisfaction of being able to tell him that he did not look well. He looked paler and thinner than before he went away.

‘Ah, but you have been living in a sensible way, and I haven't,’ he said, laughing; ‘excitement during the day, heavy dinners and more excitement at night for nearly two months are not conducive to health.’

‘You were only to be away for a fortnight.’

‘You did not answer my letters. If you had, I would have been back sooner.’

‘What! do you mean to blame me for—’ she was going to say ‘for your dissipation,’ but she put it in a milder form and said—‘for your being away so long?’

‘I do: only you could have kept me away.’

He looked quite serious, and that was a sufficiently remarkable circumstance to assure her that he was in earnest.

‘I really cannot see how the blame should fall upon me, Mr. Walton,’ she said, somewhat coldly; for she felt that her whole plan was being upset, because he would not do and say the things she had expected.

The harvesters had gone far ahead of the place where they were standing, and a line of golden sheaves marked their track. A frightened hare darted out from amongst the wheat, scudded across the stubble and disappeared through the hedge into the next field. It passed so close that it startled the horse.

‘Quiet, Jim,’ said Walton, patting his horse’s neck, and then resumed the conversation. ‘I will tell you how. My first note asked you, did you *wish* me to come back, and silence was taken as a polite negative, as the advertisements say. But I did feel a little sore about it when, after watching every post for a week, I had to make up my mind to take your silence in that way, and went off to enjoy myself elsewhere.’

‘Was it not good of me to give you the opportunity?’ and there was a twinkling smile on her face which indicated that she had recovered from whatever surprise she had felt.

‘I didn’t think so, although the sport was good, and the fun was good, and I came away a winner.’

‘Why, half of that should afford you reason enough for being grateful to me!’

‘But the whole of it didn’t, for I would much rather have been with you than in London.’

‘Thank you,’ and she made a curtsy.

‘My second note told you,’ he went on, steadily holding to his point in spite of her attempts to break down the serious manner he had assumed, ‘that I would not return, or at any rate not see you, until you asked me to do so.’

‘You had no answer to that either, and so, to prove your sincerity, here you are, uninvited.’

He was not in the least crushed by this retort, for as soon as he had soothed Jim, who had become restive again, he answered quickly:

‘Exactly, that is why I am here—to prove my sincerity.’

‘By contradicting your own words?’

‘Yes. I was put out by your silence; I was angry, and what was worse, I began to feel that it was hopeless to seek you. But now—’ he paused; she did not help him, and so he added somewhat awkwardly, ‘now I am here to ask you again, will you risk

yourself with me? I believe we could get on together, and although I do live pretty much from hand to mouth I believe that we could overcome anything if we were together.’

She saw her opportunity: he was sentimental: he was trying to make her believe that her smiles would butter the driest crust. Now was the time for the beggar-maiden to appear. Polly looked round to make sure that all the people were well out of the way, and the new character made her entrance.

She bowed her head so that he could not see her face and proceeded in a very subdued tone:

‘It is very kind of you, Mr. Walton, and I am flattered, of course, but before you press me for an answer I would like you to understand something.’

‘What is it?’

‘It cannot, I am sure, affect your decision, but I think it is right to tell you that, although I am supposed to be very well off, the failure of the bank has taken almost everything from me, and I have now barely enough to carry on the farm!’

She glanced archly at him from beneath her drooping eyelids to see the effect of this terrible announcement. His countenance did not change.

‘I know it, Polly,’ he answered gravely, ‘and that is why I am here to ask you to be my wife.’

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SCRAPE.

POLLY lifted her eyes and looked straight in his face; its pallor and gravity puzzled her extremely. Then she laughed in a subdued, half-ashamed way, and for the moment she did not observe his astonishment.

‘I see you have found me out,’ she said with a reckless smile, although there was visible a certain degree of force in the gaiety. ‘I knew you would, and I told Sarah that you would detect the trick at once.’

‘The trick?’ he exclaimed bewilderedly.

‘Yes, and I warned Sarah that I would tell who had advised me to play it. It was ridiculous. I said so from the first, but she dared me to try it, and I have done so with the result anticipated.’

‘I don’t understand you,’ he said seriously.

At that Polly laughed the more, and he, resting his arm on Jim’s neck, looked more and more astounded and curious.

‘You are the victor,’ she cried merrily; ‘you play your part

to perfection, and I have utterly failed in mine. But tell the truth—you were prepared for it. Somebody warned you?’

‘Yes, I was warned and I was prepared for what you have told me, but I was not prepared to find you take it in this manner.’

If his tone meant anything, it was that he thought her reason had been affected by her misfortune, and the continued laughter with which she hailed his reply increased the suspicion.

‘Well done, well done! But if you please, sir, you must own that it was not fair play to me that you should be put up to the joke.’

He was dumbfounded, and looked at that moment the least likely person in the world capable of playing a part in a hoax. She was not to be taken in: it was all his cleverness, and he thought to compromise her somehow by pretending to treat the matter seriously. Why, he had owned that he had been warned, and he was just keeping up the game in order to punish her. She noted, too, that he called her ‘Polly’ now, as if he had a right to do so; hitherto he had always hesitated in assuming that privilege, although it was his habit to salute everybody by the Christian name after a day’s acquaintance: but as a rule he had used the formal ‘Miss Holt’ in addressing her.

‘I cannot see the joke, Polly,’ he said perplexedly. ‘I wish I could, for your sake.’

There was an inexplicable something in his manner which brought an expression of blank astonishment to her face. Sarah had said that she would insure that he should regard her statement as true; she had not explained how she was to accomplish this, but it was evident that he was either the most perfect actor or he did take the matter seriously. Could it be possible that he believed her? She began to feel more than uncomfortable, and yet she was afraid to allow him the triumph of having beaten her with her own weapons, of making her the victim of the hoax when she had intended to be the hoaxer.

She determined to end the farce at once.

‘I own myself beaten, Mr. Walton,’ she said, half laughing, although secretly more inclined to cry with vexation; ‘you are by far the better actor, and I give in. It was only a wicked attempt to tease you, and I am sorry for having entered into it—indeed, indeed I have many a time during the last few days felt quite vexed with myself for having been so foolish as to consent to such an absurd thing, even for a moment. I don’t think I ever would have agreed to it if I had not felt sure that you could not be deceived.’

She expected him to laugh, and to say that she had done her part very well so far, but he answered more seriously than ever:

‘I would have been glad to have been deceived.’

‘Well, you can be glad in knowing yourself the victor. It is only poor uncle Job who suffers by the bank failure: it makes no difference to me except the grief I feel that neither he nor Michael will permit me to do anything for them.’

She felt awkward, and she knew that she looked awkward, and she was anxious to make amends for the frolic.

‘Are you carrying the joke a stage further?’ he observed, with very apparent sarcasm; ‘or are you in earnest now?’

‘I am quite in earnest, Mr. Walton,’ she said haughtily; ‘I intended to play a harmless jest upon you; I see you take it seriously. I beg your pardon, I can do no more.’

She bowed coldly, intimating that she had no desire to continue the conversation, and turned to follow the harvesters.

He called, and there was such a sharp note of pain in his voice that she halted at once.

‘Stop, Polly, for God’s sake. We are playing at cross purposes in some strange way—it is you who have lost by the bank failure, not Hazell and his son, although out of good nature they are trying to keep the truth from you.’

She looked back at him with a white, startled face; but she regained her self-possession instantly: this was his retaliation.

‘I have begged your pardon, Mr. Walton, and I cannot see what benefit you look forward to by trying to make me feel more ashamed of myself than I am already.’

The word ‘benefit’ stung.

‘I neither look forward nor backward; I keep a sharp eye on the present and let the other times take care of themselves.’

‘Then, what is it you mean?’

‘That you are still trying to deceive me or that you are yourself deceived. I tell you, it is you who are the loser, not they.’

‘It is no use, Mr. Walton,’ she answered, shaking her head and smiling; ‘when you make such a serious charge as that against uncle Job and the truest friend I have ever known, you must allow me to say that the jest is at an end.’

‘The jest is at an end. If you do not believe me, go to old Hazell—don’t go to Michael, but to his father—and ask if I have not told you the truth.’

There was a terrible earnestness in his voice and manner which he could not have simulated. All emotion seemed to be suddenly suppressed, and her heart felt as cold as if it were encased in ice.

She roused herself from this state, and with signs of growing excitement asked :

‘ Who told you this ? ’

‘ No matter who ; you can easily prove whether I am telling a lie or not. Say to Hazell that you mean to marry *me*, and you will hear the truth.’

‘ I will go at once, but I shall not say that.’

‘ Very well, in twenty minutes you can be there. Your horses are all out, but I will harness Jim—don’t be afraid,’ he added hastily, as she was about to interrupt, ‘ I will only drive you to the foot of the lane, and wait for you there.’

She made no further objection. In ten minutes, Jim, yoked in Polly’s wagonette, was proving his pace to her along the dusty road which lay between the Meadow and Marshstead farms. Walton often tried to induce her to test the horse’s powers, but he had never anticipated that she was to test them in a journey made for the purpose of discovering whether or not Jim’s master was a liar.

(To be continued.)

Views from a German Spion.

BY BRET HARTE.

OUTSIDE of my window, two narrow perpendicular mirrors, parallel with the casement, project into the street, yet with a certain unobtrusiveness of angle that enables them to reflect the people who pass without any reciprocal disclosure of their own. The men and women, hurrying by, not only do not know they are observed, but, what is worse, do not even see their own reflection in this hypocritical plane, and are consequently unable through its aid to correct any carelessness of garb, gait, or demeanour. At first this seems to be taking an unfair advantage of the human animal, who invariably assumes an attitude when he is conscious of being under human focus; but I observe that my neighbours' windows, right and left, have a similar apparatus, that this custom is evidently a local one, and the locality is German. Being an American stranger, I am quite willing to leave the morality of the transaction with the locality and adapt myself to the custom. Indeed, I had thought of offering it, figuratively, as an excuse for any unfairness of observation I might make in these pages; but my German mirrors reflect without prejudice, selection, or comment, and the American eye, I fear, is but mortal, and, like all mortal eyes, figuratively, as well as in that literal fact noted by an eminent scientific authority, infinitely inferior to the work of the best German opticians.

And this leads me to my first observation, namely, that a majority of those who pass my mirror have weak eyes, and have already invoked the aid of the optician. Why are these people, physically in all else so much stronger than my countrymen, deficient in eyesight? Or, to omit the passing testimony of my *Spion*, and take my own personal experience, why does my young friend Max—brightest of all schoolboys, who already wears the cap that denotes the highest class—why does he shock me by suddenly drawing forth a pair of spectacles, that upon his fresh, rosy face would be an obvious mocking imitation of the *Herr Papa*—if German children could ever, by any possibility, be irreverent? Or why does the *Fräulein Marie*, his sister, pink as Aurora, round as Hebe, suddenly veil her blue eyes with a golden *lorgnette* in the midst of our polyglot conversation? Is it to evade the direct, admiring glance of the impulsive American? Dare I say *no*? Dare I say

that that frank, clear, honest, earnest return of the eye, which has, on the Continent, most unfairly brought my fair countrywomen under criticism, is quite as common to her more carefully-guarded, tradition-hedged German sisters? No, it is not that! Is it anything in these emerald- and opal-tinted skies, which seem so unreal to the American eye, and for the first time explain what seemed the unreality of German Art?—in these mysterious yet restful Rhine fogs which prolong the twilight and hang the curtain of romance even over midday? Surely not. Is it not rather, O Herr Professor, profound in analogy and philosophy—is it not rather this abominable black-letter—this elsewhere-discarded, uncouth, slowly decaying text known as the German Alphabet, that plucks out the bright eyes of youth and bristles the gateways of your language with a *chevaux de frise* of splintered rubbish? Why must I hesitate whether it is an accident of the printer's press or the poor quality of the paper that makes this letter a 'k' or a 't'? Why must I halt in an emotion or a thought because 's' and 'f' are so nearly alike? Is it not enough that I, an impulsive American, accustomed to do a thing first and reflect upon it afterwards, must grope my way through a blind alley of substantives and adjectives, only to find the verb of action in an obscure corner, without ruining my eyesight in the groping?

But I dismiss these abstract reflections for a fresh and active resentment. This is the fifth or sixth dog that has passed my *Spion*, harnessed to a small barrow-like cart, and tugging painfully at a burden so ludicrously disproportionate to his size, that it would seem a burlesque but for the poor dog's sad sincerity. Perhaps it is because I have the barbarian's fondness for dogs, and for their lawless, gentle, loving uselessness, that I rebel against this unnatural servitude. It seems as monstrous as if a child were put between the shafts and made to carry burdens; and I have come to regard those men and women who in the weakest perfunctory way affect to aid the poor brute, by laying idle hands on the barrow behind, as I would unnatural parents. Pegasus harnessed to the Thracian herdsman's plough was no more of a desecration. I fancy the poor dog seems to feel the monstrosity of the performance, and, in sheer shame for his master, forgivingly tries to assume it is *play*, and I have seen a little 'colley' running along, barking and endeavouring to leap and gambol in the shafts, before a load that anyone out of this locality would have thought the direst cruelty. Nor do the older or more powerful dogs seem to become accustomed to it. When his cruel taskmaster halts with his wares, instantly the dog, either by sitting down in his harness, or crawling over the shafts, or by some unmistakable dog-like trick, utterly

scatters any such delusion of even the habit of servitude. The few of his race who do not work in this ducal city seem to have lost their democratic canine sympathies, and look upon him with something of that indifferent calm with which yonder officer eyes the road-mender in the ditch below him. He loses even the characteristics of species—the common cur and mastiff look alike in harness—the burden levels all distinctions. I have said that he was generally sincere in his efforts. I recall but one instance to the contrary. I remember a young colley, who first attracted my attention by his persistent barking. Whether he did this, as the ploughboy whistled, ‘for want of thought,’ or whether it was a running protest against his occupation, I could not determine, until one day I noticed that in barking he slightly threw up his neck and shoulders, and that the two-wheeled barrow-like vehicle behind him, having its weight evenly poised on the wheels by the trucks in the hands of its driver, enabled him by this movement to cunningly throw the centre of gravity and the greater weight on the man—a fact which that less sagacious brute never discerned. Perhaps I am using a strong expression regarding his driver; it may be that the purely animal wants of the dog, in the way of food, care, and shelter, are more bountifully supplied in servitude than in freedom; becoming a valuable and useful property, he may be cared for and protected as such—an odd recollection that this argument had been used forcibly in regard to human slavery in my own country strikes me here—but his picturesqueness and poetry are gone, and I cannot help thinking that the people who have lost this gentle, sympathetic, characteristic figure from their domestic life and surroundings have not acquired an equal gain through his harsh labours.

To the American eye there is throughout the length and breadth of this foreign city no more notable and striking object than the average German house servant! It is not that she has passed my *Spion* a dozen times within the last hour—for here she is messenger, porter, and *commissiionnaire* as well as housemaid and cook—but that she is always a phenomenon to the American stranger, accustomed to be abused in his own country by his foreign Irish handmaiden. Her presence is as refreshing and grateful as the morning light, and as inevitable and regular. When I add that with the novelty of being well served is combined the satisfaction of knowing that you have in your household an intelligent being, who reads and writes with fluency, and yet does not abstract your books nor criticise your literary composition; who is cleanly clad, and neat in her person, without the suspicion of having borrowed her mistress’s dresses; who may be good-looking with-

out the least imputation of coquetry or addition to her followers ; who is obedient without servility, polite without flattery, willing and replete with supererogatory performance, without the expectation of immediate pecuniary return, what wonder that the American householder translated into German life feels himself in a new Eden of domestic possibilities unrealised in any other country, and begins to believe in a present and future of domestic happiness ! What wonder that the American bachelor living in German lodgings feels half the terrors of the conjugal future removed, and rushes madly into love—and housekeeping ! What wonder that I, a long-suffering and patient master, who have been served by the reticent but too imitative Chinaman ; who have been ‘ Massa ’ to the childlike but untruthful negro ; who have been the recipient of the brotherly but uncertain ministrations of the South Sea Islander, and have been proudly disregarded by the American Aborigine, only in due time to meet the fate of my countrymen at the hands of Bridget the Celt—what wonder that I gladly seize this opportunity to sing the praises of my German handmaid ! Honour to thee, Lenchen, wherever thou goest ! Heaven bless thee in thy walks abroad, whether with that tightly booted cavalryman in thy Sunday gown and best, or in blue polka-dotted apron and bare head as thou trottest nimbly on mine errands—errands which Bridget O’Flaherty would scorn to undertake, or undertaking would hopelessly blunder in ! Heaven bless thee, child, in thy early risings and in thy later sittings, at thy festive board, overflowing with *Essig* and *Fett*, in the mysteries of thy *Kuchen*, in the fullness of thy *Bier*, and in thy nightly suffocations beneath mountainous and multitudinous feathers ! Good, honest, simple-minded, cheerful, duty-loving Lenchen ! Have not thy brothers, strong and dutiful as thou, lent their gravity and earnestness to sweeten and strengthen the fierce youth of the Republic beyond the seas, and shall not thy children inherit the broad prairies that still wait for them, and discover the fatness thereof, and send a portion transmuted in glittering shekels back to thee !

Almost as notable are the children whose round faces have as frequently been reflected in my *Spion*. Whether it is only a fancy of mine that the average German retains longer than any other race his childish simplicity and unconsciousness, or whether it is because I am more accustomed to the extreme self-assertion and early maturity of American children, I know not ; but I am inclined to believe that among no other people is childhood as perennial, and to be studied in such characteristic and quaint and simple phases as here. The picturesqueness of Spanish and Italian childhood has a faint suspicion of the pantomime and the conscious

attitudinising of the Latin races. German children are not exuberant or volatile; they are serious—a seriousness, however, not to be confounded with the grave reflectiveness of age, but only the abstract wonderment of childhood. For all those who have made a loving study of the young human animal will I think admit that its dominant expression is *gravity* and not playfulness, and will be satisfied that he erred pitifully who first ascribed ‘light-heartedness’ and ‘thoughtlessness’ as part of its phenomena. These little creatures I meet upon the street, whether in quaint wooden shoes and short woollen petticoats, or neatly booted and furred, with school knapsacks jauntily borne upon little square shoulders, all carry likewise in their round chubby faces their profound wonderment and astonishment at the big busy world into which they have so lately strayed. If I stop to speak with this little maid who scarcely reaches to the top boots of yonder cavalry officer, there is less of bashful self-consciousness in her sweet little face than of grave wonder at the foreign accent and strange ways of this new figure obtruded upon her limited horizon. She answers honestly, frankly, prettily, but gravely. There is a remote possibility that I might bite, and with this suspicion plainly indicated in her round blue eyes, she quietly slips her little red hand from mine, and moves solemnly away. I remember once to have stopped in the street with a fair countrywoman of mine to interrogate a little figure in *sabots*—the one quaint object in the long, formal perspective of narrow, gray bastard-Italian façaded houses of a Rhenish German *Strasse*. The sweet little figure wore a dark blue woollen petticoat that came to its knees, grey woollen stockings covered the shapely little limbs below, and its very blonde hair, the colour of a bright dandelion, was tied in a pathetic little knot at the back of its round head, and garnished with an absurd green ribbon. Now, although this gentlewoman’s sympathies were catholic and universal, unfortunately their expression was limited to her own mother-tongue. She could not help pouring out upon the child the maternal love that was in her own womanly breast, nor could she withhold the ‘baby talk’ through which it was expressed. But, alas! it was in English. Hence ensued a colloquy, tender and extravagant on the part of the elder, grave and wondering on the part of the child. But the lady had a natural feminine desire for reciprocity, particularly in the presence of our emotion-scorning sex, and as a last resource she emptied the small silver of her purse into the lap of the coy maiden. It was a declaration of love, susceptible of translation at the nearest *cake-shop*. But the little maid, whose dress and manner certainly did not betray an habitual disregard of gifts of this kind, looked

at the coin thoughtfully, but not regretfully. Some innate sense of duty, equally strong with that of being polite to strangers, filled her consciousness. With the utterly unexpected remark that her father *did not allow her to take money*, the queer little figure moved away, leaving the two Americans covered with mortification. The rare American child who could have done this, would have done it with an attitude. This little German *bourgeoise* did it naturally. I do not intend to rush to the deduction that German children of the lower classes habitually refuse pecuniary gratuities; indeed, I remember to have wickedly suggested to my companion that, to avoid impoverishment in a foreign land, she should not repeat the story nor the experiment, but I simply offer it as a fact—and to an American at home or abroad a novel one.

I owe to these little figures another experience quite as strange. It was at the close of a dull winter's day—a day from which all out-of-door festivity seemed to be naturally excluded; there was a baleful promise of snow in the air and a dismal reminiscence of it under foot, when suddenly, in striking contrast with the dreadful bleakness of the street, a half-dozen children, masked and bedizened with cheap ribbons, spangles, and embroidery, flashed across my *Spion*. I was quick to understand the phenomenon. It was the Carnival season! Only the night before I had been to the great opening masquerade—a famous affair, for which this art-loving city is noted, and to which strangers are drawn from all parts of the Continent. I remember to have wondered if the pleasure-loving German in America had not broken some of his conventional shackles in emigration, for certainly I had found the Carnival balls of the 'Lieder Kranz Society' in New York, although decorous and fashionable to the American taste, to be wild dissipations compared with the practical seriousness of this native performance, and I hailed the presence of these children in the open street as a promise of some extravagance, real, untrammelled, and characteristic. I seized my hat and—*overcoat*—a dreadful incongruity to the spangles that had whisked by—and followed the vanishing figures round the corner. Here they were reinforced by a dozen men and women, fantastically but not expensively arrayed, looking not unlike the supernumeraries of some provincial opera troupe. Following the crowd, which already began to pour in from the side-streets, in a few moments I was in the broad grove-like *allée*, and in the midst of the *masqueraders*.

I remember to have been told that this was a characteristic annual celebration of the lower classes, anticipated with eagerness and achieved with difficulty, indeed often only through the alternative of pawning clothing and furniture to provide the

means for this ephemeral transformation. I remember being warned also that the buffoonery was coarse, and some of the slang hardly fit for 'ears polite.' But I am afraid that I was not shocked at the prodigality of these poor people, who purchased a holiday on such hard conditions; and as to the coarseness of the performance, I felt that I certainly might go where these children could.

At first the masquerading figures appeared to be mainly composed of young girls of ages varying from nine to eighteen. Their costumes—if what was often only the addition of a broad, bright-coloured stripe to the hem of a short dress could be called a *costume*—were plain, and seemed to indicate no particular historical epoch or character. A general suggestion of the peasant's holiday attire was dominant in all the costumes. Everybody was closely masked. All carried a short, gaily-striped *bâton* of split wood, called a '*Pritsche*,' which, when struck sharply on the back or shoulders of some spectator or sister masker, emitted a clattering, rasping sound. To wander hand in hand down this broad *allée*, to strike almost mechanically and often monotonously at each other with their *bâtons*, seemed to be the extent of that wild dissipation. The crowd thickened: young men with false noses, hideous masks, cheap black or red cotton dominoes, soldiers in uniform, crowded past each other up and down the promenade, all carrying a *Pritsche*, and exchanging blows with each other, but always with the same slow seriousness of demeanour which, with their silence, gave the performance the effect of a religious rite. Occasionally some one shouted; perhaps a dozen young fellows broke out in song, but the shout was provocative of nothing, the song faltered as if the singers were frightened at their own voices. One blithe fellow, with a bear's head on his fur-capped shoulders, began to dance, but on the crowd stopping to observe him seriously, he apparently thought better of it, and slipped away. Nevertheless, the solemn beating of *Pritsche* over each other's backs went on. I remember that I was followed the whole length of the *allée* by a little girl scarcely twelve years old, in a bright striped skirt and black mask, who, from time to time, struck me over the shoulders with a regularity and sad persistency that was peculiarly irresistible to me; the more so, as I could not help thinking that it was not half as amusing to herself. Once only did the ordinary brusque gallantry of the Carnival spirit show itself. A man with an enormous pair of horns, like a half-civilised satyr, suddenly seized a young girl and endeavoured to kiss her. A slight struggle ensued, in which I fancied I detected in the girl's face and manner the confusion and embarrassment of one who was obliged to over-

look, or seem to accept, a familiarity that was distasteful, rather than be laughed at for prudishness or ignorance. But the incident was exceptional. Indeed, it was particularly notable to my American eyes to find such decorum where there might easily have been the greatest license. I am afraid that an American mob of this class would have scarcely been as orderly and civil under the circumstances. They might have shown more humour, but there would have probably been more effrontery; they might have been more exuberant, they would certainly have been drunker. I did not notice a single masquerader unduly excited by liquor—there was not a word or motion from the lighter sex that could have been construed into an impropriety. There was something almost pathetic to me in this attempt to wrest gaiety and excitement out of these dull materials—to fight against the blackness of that wintry sky, and the stubborn hardness of the frozen soil, with these painted sticks of wood—to mock the dreariness of their poverty with these flaunting raiments. It did not seem like them, or rather, consistent with my idea of them. There was incongruity deeper than their *bizarre* externals; a half-melancholy, half-crazy absurdity in their action, the substitution of a grim spasmodic frenzy for levity, that rightly or wrongly impressed me. When the increasing gloom of the evening made their figures undistinguishable, I turned into the first cross-street. As I lifted my hat to my persistent young friend with the *Pritsche*, I fancied she looked as relieved as myself. If, however, I was mistaken—if that child's pathway through life be strewn with rosy recollections of the unresisting back of the stranger American—if any burden, O Gretchen, laid upon thy young shoulders be lighter for the trifling one thou didst lay upon mine, know then that I too am content.

And so, day by day has my *Spion* reflected the various changing forms of life before it. It has seen the first flush of spring in the broad *allée*, when the shadows of tiny leaflets overhead were beginning to chequer the cool, square flagstones. It has seen the glare and fullness of summer sunshine and shadow, the flying of November gold through the air, the gaunt limbs and stark, rigid, death-like whiteness of winter. It has seen children in their queer, wicker baby-carriages, old men and women, and occasionally that grim usher of death, in sable cloak and cocked hat—a baleful figure for the wandering invalid tourist to meet—who acts as undertaker for this ducal city, and marshals the last melancholy procession. I well remember my first meeting with this ominous functionary. It was an early autumnal morning; so early that the long formal perspective of the *allée*, and the decorous, smooth, vanishing lines

of cream-and-grey fronted houses were unrelieved by a single human figure. Suddenly a tall, black spectre, as theatrical and as unreal as the painted scenic distance, turned the corner from a cross-street and moved slowly towards me. A long black cloak, falling from its shoulders to its feet, floated out on either side like sable wings, a cocked hat trimmed with crape and surmounted by a hearse-like feather covered a passionless face, and its eyes, looking neither left nor right, were fixed fatefully upon some distant goal. Stranger as I was to this Continental ceremonial figure, there was no mistaking his functions as the grim messenger knocking 'with equal foot' on every door; and, indeed, so perfectly did he act and look his *rôle*, that there was nothing ludicrous in the extraordinary spectacle. Facial expression and dignity of bearing were perfect; the whole man seemed saturated with the accepted sentiment of his office. Recalling the half-confused and half-conscious ostentatious hypocrisy of the American sexton, the shameless absurdities of the English mutes and mourners, I could not help feeling that, if it were demanded that Grief and Fate should be personified, it were better that it should be well done. And it is one observation of my *Spion* that this sincerity and belief is the characteristic of all Continental functionaries.

It is possible that my *Spion* has shown me little that is really characteristic of the people, and the few observations I have made I offer only as an illustration of the impressions made upon two-thirds of American strangers in the larger towns of Germany. Assimilation goes on more rapidly than we are led to imagine. As I have seen my friend Karl, fresh and awkward in his first uniform, lounging later down the *allée* with the *blasé* listlessness of a full-blown *militaire*, so I have seen American and English residents gradually lose their peculiarities, and melt and merge into the general mass. Returning to my *Spion* after a flying trip through Belgium and France, as I look down the long perspective of the *Strasse*, I am conscious of recalling the same style of architecture and humanity at Aachen, Brussels, Lille, and Paris: and am inclined to believe that, even as I would have met in a journey of the same distance through a parallel of the same latitude in America a greater diversity of type and character, and a more distinct flavour of locality, even so would I have met a more heterogeneous and picturesque display from a club window on Fifth Avenue, New York, or Montgomery Street, San Francisco.

In the Royal Academy.

A DRAMATIC VIGNETTE.

BY AUSTIN DOBSON.

*Amour, malheureux Amour !
Où vas-tu donc te nicher ?*

HUGH (*on furlough*). HELEN (*his cousin*).

HELEN.

They have not come ! And ten is past,—
Unless, by chance, my watch is fast :
—Aunt MABEL surely told us ‘ten.’

HUGH.

I doubt if she can do it, then.
In fact, their train . . .

HELEN.

That is,—you knew.
How could you be so treacherous, HUGH ?

HUGH.

Nay ;—it is scarcely mine, the crime.
One can’t account for railway-time . . .
Where shall we sit ? Not here, I vote.
At least, there’s nothing here of note.

HELEN.

Then *here* we stay, please. Once for all,
I bar all artists, great and small !
From now until we go in June,
I shall hear nothing but this tune :—
Whether I like LONG’s ‘Vashti,’ or
Like LESLIE’s ‘Naughty Kitty’ more ;
With all that critics, right or wrong,
Have said of LESLIE and of LONG . . .
No. If you value my esteem,
I beg you’ll take another theme ;
Paint me some pictures, if you will,
But spare me these, for good and ill . . .

HUGH.

‘Paint you some pictures!’ Come, that’s kind!
You know I’m nearly colour-blind.

HELEN.

Paint then, in words. You did before:
Scenes at—where was it? Dustypoor?
You know . . .

HUGH (*with an inspiration*).

I’ll try.

HELEN.

But mind they’re pretty.
Not ‘hog-hunts.’ . . .

HUGH.

You shall be Committee,
And say if they are ‘out’ or ‘in.’

HELEN.

I shall reject them all. Begin.

HUGH.

Here is the first. An antique Hall
(Like Chanticleer) with panelled wall.
A boy, or rather lad. A girl,
Laughing with all her rows of pearl,
Before a portrait in a ruff.
He meanwhile watches . . .

HELEN.

That’s enough.
It wants ‘verve,’ ‘brio,’ ‘breadth,’ ‘design.’ . .
Besides, it’s English. I decline.

HUGH.

This is the next. ’Tis finer far.
A foaming torrent (say Braemar).
A pony, grazing by a boulder.
Then the same pair, a little older,
Left by some lucky chance together.
He begs her for a sprig of heather . . .

HELEN.

—‘Which she accords with smile seraphic.’

I know it,—it was in the ‘Graphic.’
Declined.

HUGH.

One more, and I forego
All hopes of hanging, high or low.
Behold the hero of the scene
In bungalow and palankeen . . .

HELEN.

What!—all at once! But that’s absurd;—
Unless he’s SIR BOYLE ROCHE’S bird!

HUGH.

Permit me—’Tis a Panorama,
In which the person of the drama,
Mid Orientals dusk and tawny,
Mid warriors drinking brandy pawnee,
Mid scorpions, dowagers and griffins,
In morning rides, at noonday tiffins,
In every kind of place and weather,
Is solaced . . by a sprig of heather.

(More seriously.)

He puts that faded scrap before
The ‘Rajah,’ or the ‘Koh-i-noor’ . .
He would not barter it for all
Benares, or the Taj-Mahal . .
It guides,—directs his every act,
And word and thought . . In short . . in fact . .
I mean . .

(Opening his locket.)

Look, HELEN, that’s the heather!
(Too late! Here come both Aunts together.)

HELEN.

(What heather, Sir?

(After a pause)

And why . . ‘too late’?)

—Aunt DORA, now you’ve made us wait!
Don’t you agree that it’s a pity
Portraits are hung by the Committee?

Shakespeare's Nightingale.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

THE Nightingale is the bird of the poets. The 'immortal bird,' as Keats called it, is more sung and praised in verse than even the carolling lark, the 'winged chorister,' robin, or the lordly eagle. Every poet has sung of the Nightingale, and, not unfrequently, in strains that have caught an echo of the bird's unrivalled melody. The bird has been celebrated by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Waller, Pope, Gray, Thomson, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Moore, Southey, Coleridge, Campbell, Keble, Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson, and a crowd of poets both major and minor. The majority of these have treated his song as a merry or pleasant song, especially the earlier poets; for 'merry' and 'pleasant' were convertible terms,—'the merry harp' of the Bible Psalms being 'the pleasant harp' of the Prayer-Book version. But Shakespeare and Milton are two notable exceptions to this verdict of the majority. They—as did Petrarch—look at the subject from its classical view; to them the nightingale is the Philomela of fable; and, consequently, they erroneously represent the singing bird to be the female, and, although a 'sweet songstress,' as Milton says, yet, in the character, tone and cadence of her song, to be a 'most musical, most melancholy' bird. It is a theme that is happily touched by our Laureate, when he apostrophises the nightingale, and says,

fierce extremes employ
Thy spirit in the dusking leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy.

And elsewhere the author of 'In Memoriam' speaks, in 'The Gardener's Daughter,' of the meetings and farewells of the lovers, and of their

Whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round the nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister sorrow.

The writer of a pleasant leading-article in a daily paper recently hazarded the opinion that, as Warwickshire is not one of the chief nightingale counties, Shakespeare had never heard the bird in the full glory of its song; for, had he done so, he would never (said the writer) have allowed Portia to declare that—

The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought
 No better a musician than the wren.

The writer does not adduce any other passage from the great dramatist, whom Lord Beaconsfield, at the banquet of the Royal Academy, declared to be 'a poet greater even than Homer;' but, apparently, rests his argument on this pleasant raillery and badinage of Portia, addressed to her waiting-maid Nerissa; for, he further says that Shakespeare, whose eye and ear for Nature were as keen as those of Audubon, knew the dainty little carol of the wren, but had, evidently, never heard the nightingale in full song.

Yet it is plain, even from Portia's words, that the author of 'The Merchant of Venice' esteemed the nightingale as a far better musician than the wren; although he, to all appearance, overlooked the fact that the bird sings all through the day, as well as all through the night. Perhaps its Saxon name of night-singer may have assisted in the propagation of this error, which is not confined to Shakespeare. On some still evening in May or June he may have heard the rich trill and full song of the bird,

whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden through the budded quicks,

elsewhere than in the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Avon. He may, for example, have listened to its love-song in Middlesex, one of its favourite haunts, where, probably, Izaak Walton heard it, when its song drew forth from him that rapturous eulogium ending with the well-known words, 'Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in Heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth!' It is still a constant visitor to London—in the gardens of 'the Zoo' and also in the Botanical Gardens; and at Hampstead, Highgate, and in the suburbs, it is annually heard, despite the snares of the bird-catchers, who so easily make it their prey, that by their arts the once-famed 'Nightingale's Valley' at Clifton is now merely a valley or wooded ravine, bereft of its famous songsters. There is nothing to show to the contrary that Shakespeare, in London and its neighbourhood, may not have repeatedly heard the nightingale in the full glory of its song, and thus have been able to describe it from personal experience—unlike Sir Walter Scott, who may not in his southward journeys, have heard much of the nightingale; for he only once mentions its 'love-lorn tune,' and that in a passing simile in 'Marmion.'

It could not be expected that one who, in his many works, seems to have exhausted all the embellishments of poetry, should pass over such an enrichment as that of the nightingale's song;

although it must be confessed that the use that Shakespeare has made of it—considering the extent of his writings—is not so great as might have been expected. Still, numerous passages may be adduced that will show his knowledge of the bird. When the fairies lulled Titania to sleep, they invoked the nightingale's aid:

Philomel with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby!

Antony used the bird's name as a tone of endearment to Cleopatra, when, by night, during the battle under the walls of Alexandria, he says to her,

My nightingale!
We have beat them to their beds.

While King Lear's fool is singing, Edgar observes, 'The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale;' and when Bottom boasts to his fellow actors of his powers of modulation, he says, 'I will roar you, an 'twere any nightingale!' The yellow-stockinged, cross-gartered, fantastic Malvolio, replying to Maria, says, 'Nightingales answer daws.'

The nightingale is supposed to visit the English coast on April 21—'In April, come he will;' and the old proverb further says, 'In May, he sings all day.' In some respects this is a very truthful proverb, both as regards the male bird being the vocalist, and also a day-singer. But, with reference to the earliest days in May, the proverb, in this present year, could only apply to a few favoured spots in our southern counties. I write this from a locality where the numerous woods and copses during May and June are resonant, by night and day, with the impassioned songs of nightingales, making each copse and spinney, like Coleridge's 'grove of large extent,' where

the merry nightingale,
That crowds and hurries and precipitates,
With fast, thick warble, his delicious notes,

is answered and provoked by others, from woods and thickets, far and near. So much so is this the case—more especially during the otherwise silent night, when the occasional hooting of an owl or bark of a fox are the only sounds to break the stillness—that I am disposed to accept as a truth the statement that was made to me concerning a female servant at a farm-lodge, situated close to a nightingale-thronged wood, who gave her mistress warning that she must leave her situation, and assigned no other reason than this: 'I can't rest o' nights for the charm of them nightingales!' The word 'charm' was here used, according to the vernacular of the district, in a not very favourable sense, and signified a noisy clamour.

But in this year of grace, 1879, there were no such songs to awaken our Queens of the May, and to bid them go forth, as did Shakespeare's Hermia and Helena,

To do observance to a morn of May;

for, when the May-morn came, it had not brought with it the tardy nightingale. And no wonder, looking to the weather, which reminded us of Hood's 'Ode to May,' rather than of the 'ethereal mildness' of Thomson's 'gentle Spring,' seeing that nowadays, for the most part,

The tenderness of Spring is all my eye!
And that is blighted.

There was snow and hail, driven in lance-like lines by a strong nor'-easter, in the midst of which poor bedraggled May-queens, with their garlands and attendants, were staggering under the fitful shelter of Gampian umbrellas, and sang us songs that may have been 'most melancholy,' but were certainly not 'most musical,' and did not, in the least, remind us of the nightingale's trill. As a matter of fact, we did not hear the bird until Monday the fifth of May brought us a sunny, warmer and milder day; and then, in the evening, when the full moon was rising, we heard a sudden burst of melody from nightingales both far and near. Perhaps they would not have issued their notes of invitation to their glorious concert, had they foreseen the sudden change of weather within the next eighteen hours, to cold rain, pelting hail, a cutting north wind, and the resumption of cast-off Ulsters and seal-skins. Chaucer, as modernised by Wordsworth, relates how it was a common tale among lovers,

That it was good to hear the nightingale
Ere the vile cuckoo's note be uttered.

Milton, too, in one of his sonnets, shows how this portends 'success in love.' If this holds good, this year will be of bad portent to lovers; for, although both the cuckoo and nightingale put in an unusually late appearance, yet we heard the cuckoo telling his name to all the hills, and giving his 'double shout,' two days before we heard the nightingale.

Shakespeare would seem to have had the classical story of the origin of the nightingale continually present to his mind; and this would, naturally, tinge his allusions to Philomela's song with melancholy hues. Thus, the sleeping Imogen is found by Iachimo to have been reading 'the tale of Tereus' for three hours before retiring to rest, and to have turned down the leaf at that crisis in the story 'where Philomel gave up.' And not only in 'Cymbeline,' but still more in 'Titus Andronicus,'—as might be expected from

And further, on this point, may be quoted the speech of Valentine, in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona':

The shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns;
There can I sit alone, unseen of men,
And, to the nightingale's complaining notes,
Tune my distresses and record my woes.

In one of his 'Sonnets,' too, Shakespeare says of the nightingale,
Her mournful hymns did hush the night.

This line may remind us of Keats's 'plaintive anthem,' as applied to the nightingale's song. To a certain extent, the poet's estimate of the notes of this bird is corroborated by the Hon. Danies Barrington, who constructed a table to show the comparative merits of singing-birds; and, making 20 to be the point of perfection—a point to which he makes no song-bird attain—he puts down the nightingale's 'plaintive' notes at 19, his 'sprightly' notes at 14 (the skylark's notes being respectively 4 and 19), and for 'mellowness, compass, and duration,' 19. Thus, followed at intervals by the skylark, goldfinch, robin, and linnet, he makes the nightingale to take the first rank as a song-bird, with more plaintive than sprightly notes in its long-sustained gushes of melody. Bechstein's attempt to express the 'twenty-four different strains and couplets' that 'may be reckoned in the song of a fine nightingale, without including the delicate variations,' has resulted in the production of twenty-four lines of phonetics, of which it will be quite sufficient to take these three as a specimen:

Zozozozozozozozozozozo—zirr hading!
He—zezezezezezezezezezezezezezeze—couar—ho—dze—hoe!
Higaigaigaigaigaigai—guiagaigaigai—couior—dzio—dzio—pi!

Perhaps this attempt to represent the unrepresentable, and to translate the untranslatable, is as close as the alphabet will permit. It is, at any rate, preferable to Chaucer's attempt to realise the nightingale's note by the means of printed characters, 'Thou say'st Osee! Osee!' or even the conventional 'jug-jug!' which was first used, I think, by John Lilly, Shakespeare's contemporary, the 'Euphues' and fashionable poet of Queen Elizabeth's court, who wrote thus—

What bird so sings and yet doth wail?
Oh! tis the ravish'd nightingale.
Jug—jug—jug—jug—tereu, she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.

It is, indeed, impossible for phonetic art to represent visibly those *notes which audibly*, as Campbell beautifully says,

seem but the protracted sounds
Of glassy runnels bubbling over rocks ;

and which may be accepted by the listener as conveying diverse ideas of

sorrow and joy,
Pleasure that pines to death, and amorous pain.

The melancholy idea attaching to the song of the nightingale would be deepened in Shakespeare's mind by his acquaintance with the old fable, that the bird sings in its most melodious strains when its breast is pressed against a thorn—

the deep thorn
Which fable places in its breast of wail,

as Byron says in his allusion to the story—be it fable or folk-lore. It does not appear to be of classical origin, and it may be difficult to trace it to its source ; but it was in poetic use before Shakespeare's day ; for George Gascoigne, about the year 1570, says, in his satirical poem 'The Steel Glass,'

And thus I sing with pricke against my breast,
Like Philomene.

In his 'Two Noble Kinsmen,' he says,

O for a pricke now, like a nightingale,
To put my breast against !

And, in 'The Spanish Tragedy,' he further mentions this fable :

Haply, the gentle nightingale
Shall carol us asleep ere we be ware,
And, singing with the prickle at her breast,
Tell our delight.

This is the earliest poetic mention that I know of this fable ; but these extracts will suffice to prove that it was current in Shakespeare's day. He has used it, as I have already shown, in the passage from 'The Passionate Pilgrim ;' and in 'The Rape of Lucrece' he says,

And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye.

The fable is thought to have arisen from the popular idea that the nest of the nightingale, either on the ground or on the lowest branch of a tree, is made around a projecting thorn, against which the bird can lean her breast during her period of incubation.

Now, the nest of the nightingale is most difficult to be discovered ; and I never found more than two. In each case the nest was nothing more than a loose bundle of dry leaves, roughly

placed together, amid similar rubbish of leaves, and resting on the earth. In the one case, the nest was in my shrubbery, under a close growth of laurels; in the other case, it was in the hedge-row, by the side of a much-frequented road—reminding one of Keble's lines:

By the dusty wayside drear,
Nightingales, with joyous cheer,
Sing, my sadness to reprove,
Gladlier than in cultur'd grove.

In neither of these cases was I able to find the long thorn in the nest, which was so loose that I could not have picked it up, even if I had desired so to do. I never saw but one dead nightingale, and I hope that I may never see a second. It was in June, last year, when at mid-day a nightingale was in full song at the top of a Scotch fir in my garden; and my wife and I were listening to him, as we stood quietly, near to a fern-rockery, not many yards from his position. I was the happy possessor of four white long-haired Persian cats, two of whom were named 'Turk' and 'Russ.' 'Turk' had accompanied us in the garden; but was, to all appearance, in a summer's drowse. The nightingale flew down to a laurel, sang there awhile, and then flew on to the gravel walk, within three yards of us. There it was, in the full ecstasy of its song, when 'Turk' awoke, and with a sudden bound had seized the poor bird, and brought its melody to an instantaneous close. In a moment I had rescued the bird from him; but it was too late, for, although it lay in my hand warm and palpitating, it had received its death-blow. We felt as though we could have chanted Mrs. Hemans's 'Death Song to the Nightingale'—

Mournfully, sing mournfully,
And die away, my heart!

But even if that fable made use of by Shakespeare, concerning the nightingale and the thorn, were true, yet it would not prove the nest-keeping female bird to be the singer. *Place aux dames* may be politely allowed in many things, but not in this; and it must be confessed that Shakespeare has erred—in company with many a minor poet—in representing the singing nightingale to be the female. Instead of 'the Queen of all Music' (as Campbell says), or 'the Queen of Song,' we ought to say 'The King of Song,' if we would stick to facts and keep to the proprieties of ornithology; for, it is the male bird who

utters forth
His love-chant and disburthens his full soul
Of all its music.

Yet the various passages that I have quoted from the works of our

great dramatist, show that he makes his singing nightingale to be the female; but then he had in his mind Philomela and her woes.

I must further confess that Shakespeare also leans to the error of representing the nightingale as a night-singer only. Thus, besides some instances already quoted, including Portia's words, we have Lucrece saying,

And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
As shaming any eye should thee behold.

And who can forget Juliet's pretty pleading—her impassioned words being fitly represented by the strains of the bird whose love-song had been poured forth during her interview with her lover—

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thy ear.

Taine, when writing of Shakespeare's lovers, in 'Romeo and Juliet,' says, 'their language is like the thrill of nightingales.' How the bird sings under an Italian sky, Mrs. Browning has told us in one of the most forcible and passionate of her 'Last Poems.' And not only in 'Romeo and Juliet,' but also in 'The Passionate Pilgrim,' the lover who is anxiously longing for the morrow, when he may 'post unto his pretty,' can listen to the night-singer with no favour, and says,

While Philomel sits and sings, I sit and mark,
And wish her lays were tunèd like the lark.

Moreover, Valentine, in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' affirms,

Except I be by Silvia in the night,
There is no music in the nightingale

Occasionally, as in the lulling to sleep of Titania, Shakespeare takes a somewhat cheerier view of the bird's song. Thus, when Petruchio purposes both to woo and to win his saucy Kate, he says, 'If

She rail, why then I'll tell her plain,
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.'

And when the bewildered Christopher Sly awakes from his drunken stupor, to find himself in a stately bed in a lord's house, waited on by obsequious attendants, he is assured, when music is heard without, that

Apollo plays,
And twenty caged nightingales do sing.

By the way, when Thomson spoke of the music of the nightingale's 'dying fall,' he quoted—perhaps unconsciously—the duke's words, in 'The Twelfth Night,' concerning music's 'dying fall.'

To sum up, it seems to be evident that Shakespeare frequently

speaks of the nightingale, even if he does not refer to it for illustration and simile so often as the great extent of his writings might lead us to anticipate; and that, adopting the classical story of Philomela and her wrongs, he makes the nightingale singer to be a female, who, in the hush and solitude of night, pours forth a song which, although most musical, is also most melancholy.

An Independent Opinion.

BY JAMES PAYN.

THE modesty of 'bashful fifteen' in members of the fair sex has been a good deal insisted on, but the shyness of the most retiring maiden at that epoch is not to be compared with the shrinking sensitiveness of an unprinted young author. While his first work remains in MS. there is no miss in muslin who has not a greater assurance; albeit when they have both 'come out' it must be allowed that the author is the first to lose his modesty.

Even before he has gained the honours of type he has of course an excellent opinion of his merits—is certain that there is 'that within him' which, if it will not set the Thames on fire, will make a considerable conflagration in any suitable material; makes comparisons, not altogether unfavourable, between his own productions and those of Byron, for instance, at his own age; and draws deductions from data to be depended upon (for they are his own) that are as satisfactory as they are conclusive. But these opinions he keeps religiously to himself, or confides them to only a trusty friend or sister who believes in him.

When he has furtively slipped his MS. into the contributor's box of the 'Weekly Parthenon'—for he cannot endure the suspense involved in entrusting it to any monthly organ—he falls into a state of anxiety which I should call 'the jumps,' but that the Americans have, as usual, pirated the term and applied it to delirium tremens; let us term it 'the twitters.' And he remains in them for an indefinite time, dependent partly on whether the editor of the 'Parthenon' has mislaid or lost the precious document, and partly on his own powers of mental endurance. Then he writes in the most humble and honeyed strain to inquire after the fate of his 'unpretending little story,' and receives a printed reply, couched in antagonistic terms, to the effect that the periodical in question does not guarantee the return of any rejected contribution whatsoever. No young lady of the tender age I have indicated, and who has conceived a passion for her music-master, suffers half the pangs on discovering that, instead of being the exiled scion of a princely house, he is a 'man of family,' in quite another sense, and has been married these five years.¹

¹ It is curious that the great lord of literature who has so admirably described the slings and arrows of 'outrageous fortune,' and all the disappointments to which

I remember a most terrible accident that happened to the first production of my own pen that ought to have got into print—not ‘ought,’ of course (as I thought), in respect to merit, for there had been several others of equal intrinsic value which had been unhesitatingly and remorselessly declined, but which really could have done so but for my own impatience. I had received a letter—as sweet as the first kiss of love—from some admirable editor, expressing his approval and acceptance, and I waited, week after week, for the blessed thing to appear, as the sick man longs for the morning. I knew nothing, of course, of the mechanical necessities of a periodical, and, if I had, should only have felt that all the contrivances of science and art should have been enlisted to procure for a yearning public the immediate publication of my contribution; so, on the second week of its non-appearance, I wrote to express my surprise; on the third week, and since I had still received no answer, I wrote another letter to demand an explanation; and on the fourth week to express ‘disgust’ at what I conceived an unparalleled outrage. On this I got my MS. sent back again with ‘Declined,’ without a word of thanks, written on its first page, which bore evident marks of the printer’s hands.

It was as though some Peri had knocked at the gates of Paradise, been admitted through the golden gates for half a second, and then been shown out again with ignominy at the back door. I only hope, for the sake of my future, that those divines are in error who say that it is as wicked to have the wish to commit murder as to put that wish into effect; for I could have drunk that editor’s blood with relish.

After that little experience I became, if possible, more modest than ever.

But when the author in embryo has not only appeared in print, but published a volume of his own, matters are very different with him. His diffidence has disappeared, while his sensitiveness remains as delicate as ever, and unfortunately much more liable to meet with shocks. I got one once, or rather a succession of them, that lasted for a long railway journey, and which I am almost surprised I ever survived; for there were two factors, if it were, that went to make up the discharge (it was so far from neutral that it set my hair on end), and both of the most powerful kinds—self-love and (what is only second to it) first love for somebody else.

Arabella was my beloved object, and with Arabella and our flesh is heir, has not a word to say about the hopes and fears of authorship, the special reference to the fastidiousness of theatrical managers. If he had tried nowadays, it is certain he would know what it is to be rejected.

aunt I was to travel from London to Exeter. She was young and charming, but, as I even then perceived, somewhat frivolous in character. She liked dancing, and—what was worse—dancing with military men rather than with civilians; and she had no opinion of her own as to books—that is to say, she was not quite so certain as she ought to have been (for *I* was) of the supreme excellence of a particular story of mine which had not only been given to the public in a three-volume form, but had recently obtained the honours of a cheap edition. She liked to hear ‘what other people thought about it,’ which was clearly an act of disloyalty to me, as well as a proof of her want of judgment and independence of character. She said ‘she didn’t care for the opinions of friends and relatives about it,’ a remark which showed her to be deficient in natural affection and the reverence that is implanted even in the breast of the savage; and she wanted to know if I was personally acquainted with my reviewers, which argued suspicion of the basest sort.

Nevertheless, I loved Arabella, and would have married her if an allowance of one hundred pounds a year, and tastes that would have done honour to one of a thousand, would have permitted it. As it was, we had agreed to wait and live in hope, which is certainly preferable to living *on* it.

At Paddington station, after seeing the ladies comfortably settled in the carriage, of course I went to the book-stall to see if the ‘Bandit of the Apennines’ (it was not a domestic story like this by any means) was properly displayed, and to put a few careless questions as to how it was going off. In point of fact I meant to buy it, for I always encouraged its sale in that way whenever I took a journey. To my surprise and horror there was not one copy on the stall. ‘This is the way,’ thought I, ‘that great reputations are burked.’ However, I commanded my temper (which is beautiful, but hasty) so far as to ask of the person in charge how this infamy had occurred.

‘Well, sir,’ said he, ‘the explanation is very simple: we have just sold the last copy of the book.’

If I had had one to spare—but the fact was, that fare to Exeter made a great hole in my quarter’s allowance—I could have cont’d that man a sovereign.

Is there any other book, sir?’ he continued winningly.

Other book? No, indeed,’ thought I; ‘I hate your railway exil’ature.’ And had I not got my Arabella, the prettiest picture in the world, to look at throughout the journey?

The sale of the “Bandit” is pretty good, I suppose?’ remarked the differently.

‘It’s very quiet,’ he answered drily.

Now, what could he mean by *that*? The term ‘quiet’ as applied to the ‘Bandit of the Apennines’ was a monstrous misnomer; he lived, in fact, in a lurid atmosphere made up of combats, escapes, and wholesale massacres: the man must therefore have restricted his observation to the sale of the book only. In that case he probably meant ‘quietly prosperous’—not influenced by fits and starts of public favour, but growing more and more into popularity as its merits became known.

‘You say, my man, that you have just sold the last copy,’ said I affably; ‘would you kindly tell me—for I happen to take an interest in the author—how many copies did you take to begin with?’

‘Jem,’ cried he to a small boy at his side, whose head was only half above the counter, ‘how many had we at first of that ’ere “Bandit of the Apennines”?’

‘Oh, *that*? We never had but one,’ replied the small boy.

Again I say that I trust the desire for blood is not so culpable in the eyes of the recording angel as the actual imbruement of the hand in human gore.

I fled to my railway carriage with the smothered execration of ‘Dear me!’

I found there not only Arabella and her aunt, but another passenger—a middle-aged gentleman (but old in my eyes), who would have made a very nice companion for the latter if I could only have persuaded them to remove into another compartment and to leave us two alone. But the selfishness of old age is proverbial, and there they stuck. However, I was opposite to Arabella, and under the protection of a common railway rug we could, and did, interchange an occasional affectionate pressure of the feet—an operation that is a little difficult, by-the-bye; dangerous through its openness to the mistake of pressing somebody else’s foot, and exposed to the ridiculous error of making advances to the foot-warmer and other things under the seat. To do her justice, Arabella had never been backward in reciprocities of this kind, but on this occasion she was especially demonstrative; indeed, as I happened to possess a corn only less tender than my sentiments towards her, her attentions, which I could not of course but welcome, were a little embarrassing.

At last I perceived by the direction of her glance that they had a particular object. Her eyes were fixed on the volume that our new companion had purchased at the station, and she was telegraphing to me with intense excitement, ‘It is the “Bandit of the

I declare that for the first moment or two I quite forgot my Arabella in the consideration of this tremendous circumstance. That a stranger should have actually bought my book, paid coin of the realm for it, of his own head, without fear or favour or personal relationship, and then got into the same compartment as the author of that admirable production, was something much more than an undesigned coincidence; it was an incident (remember it was my first book) calculated to confound the infidel and establish the providential government of the world. ‘But suppose—for everything is possible, however improbable’—thought I with sudden revulsion, ‘that he shouldn’t like it, that he should yawn and even go to sleep over it, and that Arabella, who wants to know the opinion of outsiders about the “Bandit of the Apennines,” should see him?’ My heart felt cold as a stone.

It was obvious that my beloved object was enjoying the situation; her eyes sparkled even more brightly than usual—with joy, no doubt, at seeing how I was appreciated by the public; but there was a twinkle of fun about them, which I didn’t like. ‘Now we shall see what we *shall* see,’ they seemed to say.

The man was not a romantic-looking man, such as would be likely to enjoy a high-class dramatic fiction; I should have said he was a lawyer, or perhaps connected with commerce—and not in the fancy goods line either. Upon the whole I was relieved to see that, after fumbling in all his pockets for a paper-knife, he was about to put the ‘Brigand’ (which was uncut) into his travelling bag for a more convenient season, when, to my horror, Arabella’s aunt—a good-natured but officious personage—produced from her reticule the article of which he stood in need. He thanked her, and proceeded to cut the book with irreverent rapidity, as though it were a penny paper; nevertheless, I was pleased that he cut it all at once, for if he had cut as he read and stopped half-way, or even earlier, it might have produced the impression that he was tired of it.

‘It is a pity,’ he said as he handed the knife back with a bow to Arabella’s aunt, ‘that these railway books should not have their leaves cut; but they tell me the reason is that a good many of ’em don’t “go off,” and then the sheets are used for packing purposes.’

I saw Arabella’s beautiful form tremble with suppressed mirth at this frightful speech. It seemed to me that there was something unnatural and a little coarse in a girl of her age possessing such a sense of humour; her pretty lips distinctly formed the words ‘for packing purposes’ before they subsided into a roguish smile.

Then the man began to read, but not in a satisfactory manner; instead of his attention being at once riveted (as it ought to have

been, for there was a most thrilling episode in the first chapter), it was distracted by contemptible objects—the management of his railway rug, the pushing of his portmanteau farther under the seat, and by the localities on the way-side. He must have been mad himself, I thought, to have stared at the Hanwell Asylum so attentively, at the very moment—for I knew where he was by the pages he had turned over—when all his intelligence should have been concentrated on the description of the brigand's prison cell. I am not a pessimist—I endeavour to think as well of our common human nature as circumstances will permit—and yet I could almost swear that I saw him turn over two pages at a time without discovering his mistake, and that in the middle of an unequal contest between the brigand and five officers of justice, that should have stirred the blood of a sea anemone. Then, presuming upon the paper-knife as an introduction, he would address a word or two to Aunt Arabella, as to whether she liked the window shut to the very top or preferred sitting with her face to the engine (as if that signified), while the heroine, in whose adventures he ought to have been wrapped up, was escaping out of a window much too small for her, and by a rope that swayed with every gust from the mountain-side.

It was I alone, of course, who was aware of the extent of his enormity, for Arabella only knew he had my book in his hand, and Arabella's aunt did not even know that; but it was easy even for them to see that his attention was not devoted to it. Indeed, every now and then he stole a glance of admiration at Arabella herself, which I should have objected to at any time, but which under the circumstances was doubly impertinent and offensive; as an old man—old enough to be her father, forty at the very least—he ought to have been ashamed of himself, and as a man of business he ought to have been attending to his business and getting his money's worth out of his investment. Then—horror of horrors!—as we drew near Swindon (perhaps it was the motion of the train affecting his aged frame, or the need of lunch asserting itself in his enfeebled carcass) he actually began to drop off in little snatches of—I hesitate, in charity, to say sleep—but of somnolency. The idea to which I clung was that he closed his eyes the better to picture the scenes which the author of the 'Brigand of the Apennines' had so vividly painted; but this explanation it was difficult for me to communicate to Arabella (who sat next to him) by the mere pressure, however significant, of my foot; in her eyes I felt that this cold-blooded and stupid ruffian was falling asleep over my story. She had made, in fact, more than one little grimace to express her appre-

hensions upon this point, and though I had smiled back in the most cheerful way, 'He is only thinking, my dear; he is in reality charmed with the story,' she seemed to only half understand me, and shook her head in a very incredulous way. If he really should go to sleep beyond all doubt, so as to snore, for example—and he looked just the sort of man to snore—I felt that my reputation as a novelist with Arabella was gone.

However, we reached Swindon without his committing himself to that full extent; but, under the influence of lunch, I felt certain it would happen, unless something was done in the mean time, and I resolved to do it.

We all got out to have soup, and I found my opportunity of speaking to the old gentleman.

'My dear sir,' I said, 'I am sure you had no notion whose book you were reading coming along, or you would never have nodded your head over it.'

'What do you mean, my lad? I was reading my own book—the "Brigand of" something or another. I bought it at Paddington. It is rather a——'

'Hush! But you didn't write it: that's the point. That young woman in the carriage with us wrote it.'

'What, the pretty girl who sat opposite to you?'

'Yes, next to you.' (This I said with significant reproach.)

'She couldn't help seeing you nod, and it pained her.'

'She wrote that book—she?'

'Yes; she is exceedingly clever.'

'Very likely; but it seems so strange that a woman should have written such a book at all,' he murmured. 'It's so sensational, so full of scenes. Dear me!'

'She's a girl of genius, my dear sir.'

'No doubt, no doubt,' he said. 'How very unfortunate! Did I nod? If I did so, it was in adhesion to her sentiments. I remember now that some of them struck me as very beautiful.'

'They are all beautiful,' said I; 'it is a noble book. But she would not have you know she wrote it for any money. It was published anonymously because she was too modest to put her name to it. You must not hint at what I have told you; only, you had better alter your manner.'

'Thank you; I will, of course. I have a sincere admiration for the book, and I shall show it.'

'Only, don't excite her suspicions; be careful about that.'

He nodded till I thought he would have nodded his old head off; and we returned to the carriage very amicably and resumed our journey.

‘I always feel sleepy after luncheon,’ said Arabella’s aunt, by way of excuse for the forty winks in which she felt herself about to indulge.

‘So do I in a general way,’ said the old gentleman; ‘but I have a book here that interests me immensely.’

I saw Arabella’s eyes light up with pleasure, then hid myself behind a newspaper which I had just purchased for that very purpose; I was a very young man, and my tender conscience reproached me for my little duplicity. I had not the hardihood to look; I only listened, which, fortunately, my darling took not for remorse but modesty.

‘I thought you didn’t seem to like it,’ said Arabella’s aunt, who was a plain-spoken person.

‘On the contrary, I am delighted with it; it is not often one buys a book at a venture—for I confess I never heard of the work before—and finds one has drawn such a prize. I am not myself much of a novel-reader, but henceforth I shall look for a book by the author of the “Brigand of the——”’

Would it be credited that he had to look at the title-page before he said, ‘Apennines’? But such is the ‘outside public.’

‘The “Brigand of the Apennines!”’ exclaimed the old lady in great excitement. ‘Why, that’s—’ Here, thank goodness, she was stopped by a cross volley of reproachful glances from her niece and me.

Arabella was very anxious that her aunt should not reveal the authorship, on account of her craze for an ‘independent opinion,’ and of course I was still more solicitous not to have my innocent little artifice exposed. Our united efforts had the happiest effect; they sealed the old lady’s lips, and convinced the stranger that Arabella was the real Simon Pure.

‘There is a strength and vigour about this book,’ continued the old gentleman, ‘that keeps one’s attention at the fullest stretch; one has only to lay it down and close one’s eyes to feel oneself one of the *dramatis personæ*. Have you ever read it, sir?’ And the hypocritical wretch actually addressed himself to me.

‘Yes,’ I said; ‘it is a good story, and, as you suggest’ (for I determined to pay him out for his audacity), ‘singularly masculine in style.’

‘Nay, I didn’t say that,’ he answered hurriedly; ‘it has the vigour of a male writer, but there is a delicacy, a purity, a—dear me! what shall I call it?—a perception of the niceties of female nature in it, in which I seem to recognise a lady’s hand.’

Here Arabella, shaking with laughter, put up her muff before her eyes, and I took advantage of the circumstance to give the

man a warning glance that he was going too far. My fear was that before we got to Exeter there would be an *éclaircissement* of some kind ; but, to my immense satisfaction and relief, he left the train at Bath.

‘I have no friends here, and am going to stay at an hotel,’ said our fellow-passenger at parting ; ‘but while I have this book unfinished I shall not find the time hang heavy on my hands.’

‘Upon my life,’ said Arabella’s aunt as we steamed away, ‘one would think, James, that you had told the man you had written the book.’

‘Upon my word and honour,’ said I fervently, ‘I told him nothing of the kind.’

‘I am quite sure he didn’t,’ cried Arabella indignantly ; ‘James is incapable of such underhand conduct. And I must say the independent praise of that gentleman is very satisfactory and convincing. I really began to fear at first that he didn’t like the book. If so, it evidently grew upon him.’

‘It grew beautifully,’ said I, ‘the soil being rich and favourable.’

‘Yes, evidently a most intelligent man,’ said Arabella’s aunt, ‘and exceedingly polite. I am so glad I lent him that paper-cutter.’

And so was I, although there had been moments (when he was “feeling himself one of the *dramatis personæ*”) when I had regretted it very much.

Madame Récamier.

DURING the period of directorial government in France, three lovely women—the three Graces, as they were styled by the madrigal writers of the time—enjoyed, and according to the unanimous testimony of their contemporaries fully merited, the exclusive prestige of incomparable beauty; these were Thérèse Cabarrus (Madame Tallien), Joséphine Beauharnais, and Madame Récamier. Their celebrity dated from Thermidor, when Paris, exulting in the downfall of Robespierre and the conclusion of the Reign of Terror, forgot its past troubles in the delirious excitement of the hour, and hailed with feverish eagerness every opportunity of gratifying its thirst for pleasure and ‘effervescence of luxury.’

Then, like ‘three flowers springing from an extinct volcano,’ this trio of sirens emerged from the relative obscurity of private life into the full blaze of notoriety, became the supreme arbiters of taste, and inaugurated that semi-classical costume which none but themselves could have ventured to adopt. Here is Madame Tallien, sketched with his usual picturesque accuracy by Carlyle; ‘her sweeping tresses snooded by glittering antique fillet, bright-dyed tunic of the Greek woman; her little feet naked as in antique statues, with mere sandals, and winding string of riband, defying the frost!’¹ Here is Joséphine, described by herself in a letter addressed to the future Princesse de Chimay, and inviting her to be present at a ball about to be given at the Hôtel Thélusson: ‘Come in your peach-blossom skirt, for it is essential that our dress should be the same; I shall wear a red handkerchief tied in the créole fashion, a bold attempt on my part, but admirably suited to you, whose complexion, if not prettier, is infinitely fresher than mine. Our rivals must be eclipsed, and utterly routed!’

This red handkerchief, tied in the peculiar manner alluded to, was subsequently discarded by both ladies, but constantly worn by Madame Récamier, who considered it particularly becoming to her, even during the latter years of her life. In other respects, similarity of costume was not uniformly adhered to; while Madame Tallien set the fashion of diaphanous tunics, and Joséphine collected the rarest onyxes, agates, and cameos wherewith to adorn her luxuriant hair, Madame Récamier selected, as the most appropriate accompaniment to her surpassing loveliness, the

¹ Each toe adorned with a superb emerald.

graceful appendage of the veil. Nothing could have more deliciously harmonised with the perfect oval of her face and the slender but exquisitely moulded symmetry of her form; in Cosway's lifelike portrait of her we see the effect of this simple but all-important adjunct, and comprehend the enthusiasm of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who, when asked what had pleased him most during his stay in Paris, replied: 'Since I have seen Madame Récamier, I can remember nothing else!' There must, indeed, have been something exceptionally attractive in a woman whose powers of fascination were so irresistible, and who to the very latest moment of her existence exercised so enduring an influence over all with whom she came in contact; and as she does not appear to have been endowed with any extraordinary abilities, or even to have particularly shone in conversation, the devotion of such men as Châteaubriand, Benjamin Constant, and Ballanche may be regarded as perhaps the rarest and most significant homage ever offered at the shrine of beauty.

Jeanne Françoise Julie Adelaide Bernard was born at Lyons, December 4, 1777. Her father, Jean Bernard, was a notary in that city; of her mother, whose maiden name was Julie Matton, and who died in 1807, little has been recorded beyond her acknowledged reputation as 'jolie femme.' About 1784, the youthful Juliette (as she was usually styled) commenced her education in a convent at Lyons, M. Bernard having at the same time obtained a post connected with the financial department in Paris, where he took up his quarters in the Rue des Saints Pères. Shortly after, he was joined there by his daughter, who henceforth continued her studies under the best masters of the capital, and, besides attaining some proficiency in instrumental music, was instructed in singing by Boieldieu. During the Reign of Terror, April 24, 1793, when little more than fifteen years old, she married the banker Jacques Rose Récamier, and in 1796 was already cited among the reigning beauties of the time, creating the greatest sensation wherever she appeared. At the Church of St. Roch, where she undertook the office of *quêteuse*, she is said to have so distracted the attention of the congregation, that those who were not near enough to approach her stood on chairs in order to see her; and a similar curiosity was manifested at the promenade of Longchamps. Among her admirers at this period were Barras and Talleyrand, the latter of whom was so captivated by her graceful performance of a shawl dance (afterwards introduced in 'Corinne') that he remarked, he knew no greater pleasure than to look at Madame Récamier, unless it were that of being looked at by her.

In 1798, her husband purchased the hôtel formerly inhabited by Necker in the Rue du Mont-Blanc (now Chaussée d'Antin), and attracted thither all the wealth and fashion of Paris by a series of brilliant entertainments, at one of which Madame Vigée le Brun in her 'Recollections' mentions having been present. There Madame Récamier first met Madame de Staël; their acquaintance gradually ripened into intimacy; and so partial were they to each other's society, that, as Madame Hamelin laughingly observed, the safest way to insure the presence of either was to invite both. It was, we believe, at a dinner party at her house that a young man, delighted at finding himself seated at table with Madame de Staël on his right hand, and Madame Récamier on his left, complimented them ambiguously by thanking his hostess for placing him between wit and beauty; upon which the Swedish ambassadress coolly retorted that this was the first time in her life she had ever been called beautiful.

In 1799, when Lucien Bonaparte was Minister of the Interior, Madame Récamier was invited to a grand banquet given by him in honour of the First Consul, who, as is well known, was by no means insensible to the charm of a pretty woman. 'Why did you not sit next me at table?' he asked her in the course of the evening. She replied that she could not take such a liberty without having been authorised to do so. 'You did wrong,' said Napoleon; 'the place was intended for you, and you ought to have known it.' This seems to have been almost their last meeting, for although Lucien, whom she personally disliked, occasionally visited her, a circumstance soon after occurred which rendered any further communication between her and the First Consul impossible. Her father, who had been appointed to the office of postmaster-general, was suddenly removed from his post in 1802, on the charge of having allowed certain parties implicated in a royalist conspiracy to address their letters to his house; the matter was strictly investigated by the government, and sufficient proof, if not of his absolute culpability, at least of tacit connivance, was established to warrant his dismissal and subsequent imprisonment. Bernadotte, at Madame Récamier's earnest solicitation, endeavoured to intercede in his favour, but in vain; and although eventually released from confinement, M. Bernard's administrative career was virtually closed. Meanwhile, the circle of his daughter's acquaintance counted agreeable additions in the persons of Laharpe, Mathieu de Montmorency, and the Duc de Laval, the two latter of whom remained her attached friends through life; she was still the admired of all admirers, and although, in consequence of her father's misfortune, the festivities of the Rue du Mont-Blanc

suffered a temporary interruption, she continued to receive her intimates as usual. M. de Tocqueville alludes as follows to her exquisite tact as *maîtresse de maison*, a passage quoted by Mr. Hayward in his Essays: 'The talent, labour, and skill which she wasted on her *salon* would have gained and governed an empire. She was virtuous, if it be virtuous to persuade everyone of a dozen men that you wish to favour him, though some circumstance always occurs to prevent your doing so. Every friend thought himself preferred.'

The concluding statement is hardly borne out by facts, for it is certain that, however inclined she may have been to court admiration, she never for a moment forgot her position, nor, even at the zenith of her celebrity, was the slightest breath of scandal ever associated with her name. Kotzebue, who saw her frequently during his stay in Paris about this time, corroborates this in an anecdote related in his 'Reminiscences.' 'Happening one day to go with her into a print-shop where she was personally unknown, the dealer showed us, among other novelties that had lately appeared, a caricature of herself. She took it up, and after carefully examining it, laid it on the counter, saying, "This person is probably a woman of doubtful reputation." "On the contrary, madame," replied the print-seller, "very few ladies in Paris enjoy so good a one."' The future victim of Sand is enthusiastic in her praise. 'On my arrival in France,' he says, 'I had a certain prejudice against her; misled by the calumnies published respecting her in Germany, I imagined her to be a coquette whose head was turned by flattery, and wished simply to see, but not to know her. An opportunity of satisfying my curiosity was soon afforded me, for while at the opera one evening, a gentleman sitting near me pointed to a lady who had just entered a box opposite to us, and informed me that it was Madame Récamier. She was dressed in white, without a single ornament; and her modest appearance so pleased me that I gladly accepted the offer of an introduction to her. She received me most affably, and for several weeks I was constantly in her company, and had ample leisure to discover that the reports I had previously heard concerning her were totally unfounded. In the midst of Parisian dissipation, although married to a man old enough to be her father, she conducted herself with the strictest propriety, and was as universally respected as she was admired; having no children, she adopted those left to her charge by one of her nearest relatives, and brought them up as tenderly and carefully as if they had been her own.'

In 1803, Madame de Staël having been ordered by Napoleon to leave Paris, Madame de Récamier placed at her disposal her

country house at St. Brice, an act of courage highly resented by the Emperor, and ultimately causing her own disgrace; during the peace of Amiens she visited London,¹ where, besides being a frequent guest at Carlton House, she enjoyed the society and friendship of the leading notabilities of the period, including Charles Fox, and Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire. Three years later her husband, whose fortune had been irretrievably damaged by financial speculations, became a bankrupt, the hôtel in the Rue du Mont Blanc, together with his other valuable possessions, was sold, and Madame Récamier found herself suddenly reduced to a state of comparative poverty. At this juncture Madame de Staël, hearing of her friend's embarrassed position, invited her to Coppet, where the Prince Augustus of Prussia, Schlegel, and Benjamin Constant were at that time staying, and organised in her honour a series of private theatricals, Aricie in 'Phèdre' being one of the parts assigned to the charming visitor, who by all accounts, owing to her excessive timidity, did not materially add to the effect of the performance.

In 1811, after the seizure by order of Napoleon of 10,000 copies of Madame de Staël's 'Allemagne,' Madame Récamier, in defiance of a warning privately conveyed to her from the Tuileries, again returned to Coppet, and a sentence of exile from Paris was consequently pronounced against her. We next find her at Châlons, and subsequently at Lyons, where she became acquainted with Ballanche, one of her most sincerely attached friends in after days; and an episode of the first interview between them has been recorded as follows: 'As soon as Ballanche, who was then residing at Lyons, heard of her arrival, he hastened, bashful as he was, to her hotel, and was received by her with such cordiality that he entirely forgot his habitual nervousness, and began to discourse as freely and eloquently as if he had known her all his life. While he was speaking, he observed her turn pale, and on asking the reason, she frankly admitted that the odour of his shoes (which had been newly blacked for the occasion) was insupportable to her. Without saying another word he quietly withdrew, left his shoes outside the door, re-entered the room as if nothing had happened, and, to Madame Récamier's great astonishment, resumed the conversation exactly where he had left it.'

In 1813, she visited Rome and Naples, prolonging her sojourn in the latter city by the express desire of Madame Murat, and in

¹ In the course of her stay she sat to Cosway for her portrait, perhaps the most faithful resemblance existing of her, not even excepting the fine picture by Gérard in the gallery of the Louvre. David had previously sketched her face, but left it unfinished.

1814 returned to Paris, after an exile of nearly three years. The death of Madame de Staël in 1816, and the departure from France of her scarcely less intimate friend, Madame de Krüdner, the talented author of 'Valérie,' affected her deeply; and feeling a growing disinclination to mix henceforward in general society, she conceived the idea of establishing herself in some quiet locality, the privilege of admission to which should be exclusively confined to those who, either from long-standing friendship or on account of their own personal merits, had a peculiar claim to her sympathy. No better place could have been selected for the purpose than the Abbaye-au-Bois in the Rue de Sévres, a vast building formerly a convent, but since the revolution converted into a species of caravansary, the apartments in which were let to different tenants, one of these being the Duchesse d'Abrantis (Madame Junot), who there composed her Memoirs. Thither she definitively retired in 1819, and from that period until her death rarely quitted it except during the years 1823 and 1824, when she visited Italy for the second time, profiting by her stay in Rome to become acquainted with the painters Guérin and Léopold Robert, and renewing her intimacy with Hortense Beauharnais, Duchesse de St. Leu.

She had not been long installed in the Abbaye-au-Bois before the prestige of her name had gathered round her the most distinguished celebrities of the period; the circle of her *habitués*, at first restricted to some half-a-dozen especial favourites, gradually included the recognised leaders of literature and art, forming an assemblage of talent scarcely equalled by the most brilliant *salon* of the preceding century; among these were Châteaubriand, her dearest and most valued friend,¹ Benjamin Constant, Ballanche, Ampère, Prosper de Barante, Humboldt, Villemain, Eugène Delacroix, and Augustin Thierry; the fair sex being attractively represented by Delphine Gay, our own Maria Edgeworth, and Miss Berry. There the political and social questions of the day were discussed, literary and dramatic novelties criticised, and the latest *bons mots* of M. de Talleyrand circulated; each new-comer contributed his quota of information or amusement to the common stock, varying the conversation by the introduction of every imaginable topic, from the state of Europe to the toilette of Mdlle. Mars. Now and then, the hostess herself would relate some anecdote connected with her youth, one of which, referring to Joseph Buonaparte after his accession to the throne of Naples, has

¹ 'When he deigned to talk,' says Madame Ancelot in her 'Salons de Paris,' 'everybody was bound to listen, and no one was allowed to talk a moment longer than seemed agreeable to the idol.'

fortunately been preserved. ‘I was standing one day,’ said Madame Récamier, ‘at the door of the Spanish ambassador’s hôtel, conversing with the King and M. Beffroy de Reigny, or, if you prefer it, “le cousin Jacques;” the royal carriage was in waiting, and the Prince, who was always very gallant, had just taken leave of me, when I heard a gruff voice muttering something close to my ear. I turned round, and beheld a grenadier, a thorough “vieux de la vieille,” who had posted himself by the footway as a sort of amateur sentinel. “Citizen,” he blurted out, addressing King Joseph, “thy equipage is ready;” then, changing his tone after a moment’s reflection, he added, “whenever it may please your Majesty to step in!”’

The death of her husband in 1830 occasioned no material alteration in Madame Récamier’s mode of life; she still held her little court in the Abbaye-au-Bois, the fresh additions to her circle comprising such rising celebrities as Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Mérimée, and Mdlle. Rachel. Up to 1848, her nightly receptions continued without interruption; but the demise of Châteaubriand in that year,¹ followed shortly after by that of Ballanche, added to the consciousness of failing strength and impaired eyesight, rendered her wholly incapable of exertion, and she lingered on, growing weaker and weaker, until 1849, when she was suddenly seized with an attack of cholera, and expired on the eleventh of May, in her seventy-second year.

Ten years later, her ‘Recollections and Correspondence’ were published in two volumes by her niece, Madame Lenormant; the title, however, of the work is in some respects a misnomer, its contents including a vast number of letters addressed to her by Châteaubriand, Ballanche, the brothers Montmorency, etc., but scarcely anything beyond a few brief and unimportant notes of Madame Récamier herself.

CHARLES HERVEY.

¹ When she became a widow, he had earnestly solicited her to marry him; but she dissuaded him from the project by saying *en vraie Parisienne*: ‘If I did, where would you pass your evenings?’

Calculating Boys.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

IN one of the essays of my 'Science Byways' I considered, in a paper 'On some Strange Mental Feats,' the marvellous achievements of Zerah Colburn, one of the most remarkable of the so-called 'calculating boys.' I advanced a theory in explanation of his feats which was in some degree based on experience of my own. I have since found reason to believe that the theory, if correct in his case, is certainly not generally applicable to cases of rapid mental calculation. I now propose to consider, in relation to that theory and also independently, the remarkable feats of calculation achieved by the late Mr. George Bidder in his boyhood. It may be remembered that, in my former paper, I had specially in view the possibility of ascertaining from the discussion of such achievements the laws of cerebral action, and especially of cerebral capabilities. It is with reference to this possibility that I wish now to examine some of the evidence afforded by the feats of Colburn, Bidder, and other 'calculating boys.'

And first, let me show reason for still retaining faith in the theory which I advanced in 1875 respecting Colburn's calculating powers. In so doing, a difference between his feats and Bidder's will be indicated which appears to me important.

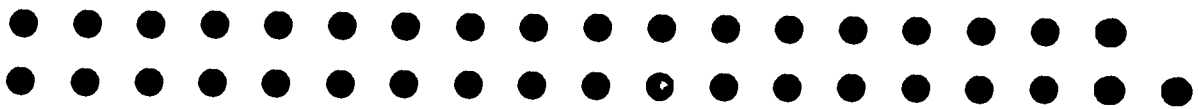
So far as the long and elaborate processes of computation are concerned, which Colburn achieved so rapidly and correctly, there may be no special reason for adopting any other explanation in his case than we are forced, as will presently appear, to adopt in Bidder's case. Thus, Colburn multiplied 8 into itself fifteen times, and the result, consisting of fifteen digits, was right in every figure. But Bidder could multiply a number of fifteen digits into another number of fifteen digits with perfect correctness and amazing rapidity, and we know that he employed a process familiar to arithmeticians. Again, Colburn extracted the cube root of 268,336,125 before the number could be written down; and this feat was one which had seemed to me beyond the power of any computer employing the ordinary methods, or any modification of those methods. Yet I am inclined now to believe that Bidder would have obtained the result as quickly, simply through the marvellous rapidity with which he applied ordinary processes.

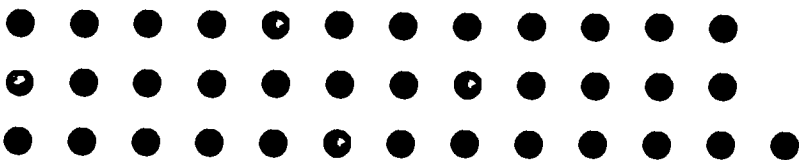
Where, however, we seem compelled in Colburn's case to

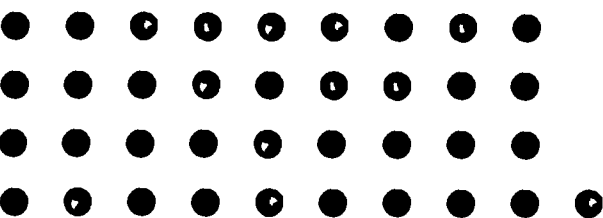
recognise the employment of a method entirely different from those given in the books, is in cases resembling the following:— He was asked to name two numbers which, multiplied together, would give the number 247,483, and he immediately named 941 and 263, which are the only two numbers satisfying the condition. The same problem being set with respect to the number 171,395, he named the following pairs of numbers: 5 and 34,279, 7 and 24,485, 59 and 2,905, 83 and 2,065, 35 and 4,897, 295 and 581, and lastly, 413 and 415. Still more marvellous was the next feat. He was asked to name a number which will divide 34,083 without remainder, and he immediately replied that there is no such number; ‘in other words, he recognised this number as what is called a *prime*, or a number only divisible by itself and unity, as readily and quickly as most people would recognise 17, 19, or 23, as such a number, and a great deal more quickly than probably nine persons out of ten would recognise 53 or 59 as such.’ The last feat of this special kind was the most remarkable of all, but the length of time required for its accomplishment, even by this wonderful calculating boy, was such that the evidence does not appear altogether so striking as that afforded by the last case, which I must confess seems to me utterly inexplicable, save on the theory presently to be re-enunciated. Fermat had been led to the conclusion that the number 4,294,967,297, which exceeds by unity the number 2 multiplied fifteen times into itself, has no divisors. But the celebrated mathematician Euler, after much labour, succeeded in showing that the number is divisible by 641. The number was submitted to Zerah Colburn, who was, of course, not told of the result of Euler’s researches into the problem, and after the lapse of some weeks the boy discovered the one divisor which Euler had only found with much greater labour.

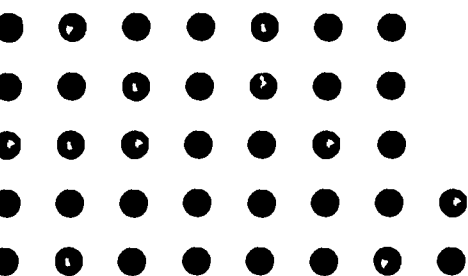
My theory respecting achievements of this special kind—that is, cases in which a calculator rapidly finds the exact divisors of large numbers, if such divisors exist, or ascertains the non-existence of any exact divisor of such numbers—was based on the known fact that all good calculators have the power of picturing numbers not as represented by such and such digits, but as composed of so many ‘things.’ Having once this power in no inconsiderable degree myself, and knowing that, when I had it, I frequently used it in the special manner in question, I was led to believe that Colburn and other calculating boys would employ it in that manner, only with much greater rapidity, dexterity, and correctness. Let us suppose that the number 37 is thought of, taking it for convenience of illustration as a representative of some much larger number, whose real nature (as to divisibility by other num-

bers) is not known. Requiring to know whether 37 is a prime number or not I would not, (in the time to which I now carry back my thoughts) divide the number successively by 2, 3, &c., but would see the number passing through the forms here indicated.

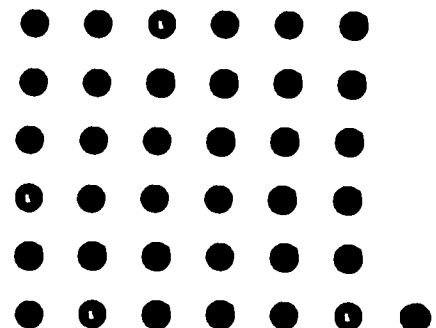
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2. 

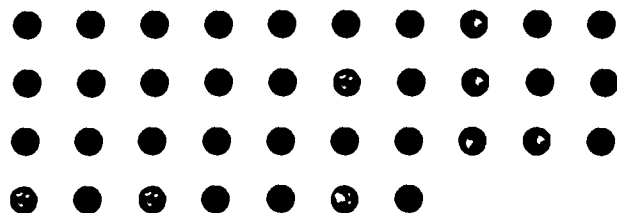
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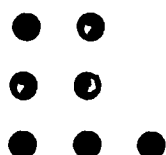
and 5.



These various arrays would all be formed from the following mental presentation of the number 37 :

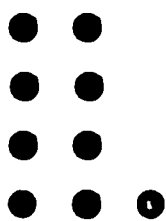
6. 

which, it will be observed, is derived directly from the number as presented in the common notation. Thus 37 means three tens and seven units, and the grouping above (numbered 6, but really the first pictured grouping) shows three rows of ten dots and one row of seven. It is easily seen that groupings 2 and 3 are in a moment formed from 6. Grouping 2 is formed from 6 by imagining the lowest row of seven dots set into the form

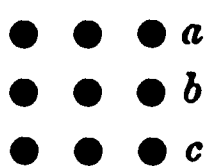


and run over to the right of the three rows of ten dots. Group-

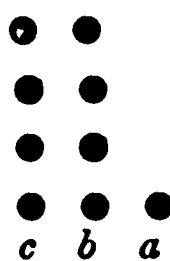
ing 3 is formed from 6, by imagining the little square of nine dots on the right set into the form



which is done at once by supposing the vertical row of three dots on the right of 6, placed as a horizontal row in the corner under the two neighbouring vertical rows of three each; that is, by changing the three right hand rows from



to



The changes from 2 on the one hand to 1, and from 3 on the other to 4 and 5, are similarly effected. If the reader will make the actual calculation (using the word *calculation* in its real sense as meaning *pebbling*), taking 37 pebbles, dice, or other objects, and marshalling them first as in 6, and then as in 2 and 1, back again to 6, and then as 3, 4, and 5, he will see how easy the transformations are. But if they are easy when actual objects are shifted about, they are much easier, at least to anyone who can picture groups of objects (dots, or the like) at will, when the mind makes all the transformations. After a little practice the changes above figured for such a number as 37 would be made in a moment, and the changes for a number of several hundreds in half a minute or so—this in the case of a mind not possessing exceptional power in this way. But as a Morphy or a Blackburne can play twenty games of chess blindfold, recognising in each, with amazing rapidity, a number of lines of play on both sides for nine or ten moves in advance—which seems even to an ordinary blindfold player scarcely explicable, and to an ordinary chess-player almost miraculous—so a Colburn or a Bidder would be able to apply the marshalling system above illustrated as rapidly to a number of many millions or billions, as I, when a boy, could apply it to a number of several hundreds. Accordingly I was led to recognise in this marshalling method the explanation of Colburn's wonderful achievements in finding divisors for numbers, or recognising quickly when a number has no divisors.

For it will be seen that the groupings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, above, at once show that 37 has no divisors but itself and unity. (Of

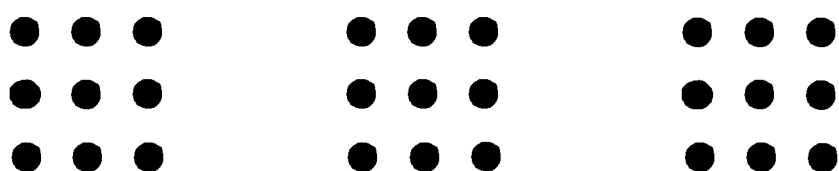
course we know in this case that 37 cannot be divided ; and even in the case of much larger numbers we may know, without the trouble of trying the division, or marshalling the pictured number, that such numbers as 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, and others, will not divide a number—for instance, if it is an odd number no even number will divide it, and if it does not end with a 5 or a 0 no number ending in 5 will divide it. But, as already explained, the number 37 is to be regarded only as selected for the purpose of conveniently illustrating the marshalling method. A larger number would have required several pages of unsightly groups of dots.) From grouping 1 we see that division by the number 2 will leave one as a remainder, for a dot remains alone on the right. From grouping 2 we see in like manner that one will be left as a remainder after division by 3, for the group shows twelve columns of three each, and one over. So grouping 3 shows nine columns of four dots, and one over ; grouping 4 shows seven columns of five each, and two over ; and lastly, grouping 5 shows six columns of six each, and one over. We need not go on, because it is manifest from grouping 5 that if we took columns of any greater number than six each we should have fewer than six rows of them, and we have already learned that no number less than six is an exact divisor. The marshalling of our number, then, has shown that it is a prime.

In like manner, if a number has divisors, this method at once shows what they are. Thus, suppose the number had been 36, then we should have obtained groupings 1, 2, 3, and 5, without the odd man over, while the grouping 4 would have shown only one over instead of two. Thus we should have learned that 36 is divisible by 2, 3, 4, and 6 without remainder, and by 5 with remainder one.

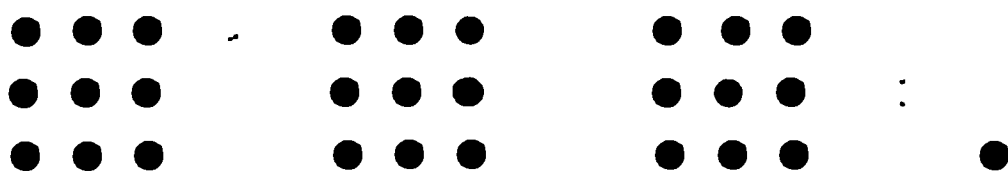
So this method shows at once whether a number is an exact square, and if so what its square root is. Thus, if the number had been 36, the marshalling method would give (after perhaps groupings 3 and 4 had been tried) the grouping 5, without the odd man over, and we see that this grouping is a perfect square with six dots on each side. Thus we learn that 36 is a square number, its square root being 6.

For determining whether a number is a perfect cube, the plan which would probably be used by one possessing in a marked degree the marshalling power would be that of grouping his dots into sets having not only length and breadth, as in the groupings above, but height or thickness also. But one less skilful in picturing groupings would simply marshal the number into sets of *equal squares*, until either he found one set in which there were as

many squares as there were dots in the side of each set, or else perceived that no such arrangement was possible. Thus if the number were 27 he would come, by the marshalling method, on this arrangement—



three squares, each three in the side, showing that the number is thrice three times three, or is the cube of three. If the number had been 28, say, so that it had come to be grouped mentally, thus,



it would be seen at once that the number is not a perfect cube ; for clearly if we try squares fewer in the side we shall have too many, and if we try squares more in the side we shall have too few. We could have a row of seven squares of four each (two in the side) with none over ; but that is not what we want. And with larger numbers the result would be equally decisive ; so soon as we had a set of squares nearly equal in number to the number of dots in the side of each, with or without any over, we should be certain the number was not a perfect cube ; for of squares one more in the side there would be too many, and of squares one less in the side too few. Thus take the number 421. We should presently get, on marshalling, eight squares, each seven in the side, and 29 over, which would not make such a square ; but we should only have six complete squares of eight in the side, and we should have eleven complete squares of six in the side.

I do not know which of the two plans described in the preceding paragraph a skilful mental-marshallist would adopt. In my own mental marshalling I never had occasion to seek for the cube roots of numbers. I should say, however, that most probably the second would be the method adopted. For while as yet the computer had had little practice this would be the only available method ; and after he had once fallen into the way of it he would not be likely, I should say, to take up the other.

So much respecting the theory I adopted in explanation of Colburn's remarkable readiness in finding divisors, detecting primes, and so forth. It still seems to me probable that he largely made use of this method of marshalling, the power of which few would conceive who had not tried it—though, of course,

it only has value for those who possess the power of picturing arrays of objects in great number, and of readily marshalling such arrays in fresh order. Yet it is certain that many calculators proceed on an entirely different plan. For instance, in 1875 I had the pleasure of a long conversation with Professor Safford (of Boston, Mass.), whose skill, when young, in mental calculation had been remarkable. He told me, with regard to the determination of the divisors of large numbers, that he seemed to possess the power of recognising in a few moments what numbers were likely to divide any given large number, and then of testing the matter in the usual way, by actual division, but with great rapidity. He said that to this day he found pleasure in taking large numbers to pieces, as it were, by dividing them into factors; or else, where no such division was possible, in satisfying himself on that point. He had also come to know the properties of many large numbers in this way, remembering always the divisors of any number he had examined, or its character as a prime if it had proved to be so.

What we know about the late Mr. Bidder, who was in some respects the most remarkable of all the calculating boys, leaves no room to doubt that his processes of mental arithmetic were commonly only modifications of the usual processes,—*not* altogether unlike them, as the theory I formerly advanced would have implied.

The facts now to be related came out in a very interesting correspondence which recently appeared in the pages of the 'Spectator.' The correspondence was suggested by certain remarks respecting the late Mr. G. P. Bidder in a well-written article on Calculating Boys, which seemed to imply that Bidder in after-life showed no marked abilities. 'He had the good sense,' says the writer in the 'Spectator,' 'after delighting the "groundlings" by performing marvellous arithmetical feats, to study carefully a profession. He became a civil engineer of some eminence, enjoyed the confidence and esteem of Robert Stephenson, was once President of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and drew up some tables which are of use to his professional brethren.' The writer in the 'Spectator' went on to discuss the powers shown by Colburn, Bidder, and others, referred to Colburn as admittedly a mediocrity, and then said, 'The only exception to the rule that juvenile calculators prove mediocrities which occurs to us is Whately, who had undoubtedly for a short time an extraordinary aptitude for figures, akin to that of Bidder and Colburn, and who, if he had been unfortunate enough to have had a father as vain and silly as Colburn's was, might have been exhibited to admiring crowds.' Major-General Robertson sent extracts from letters by

Professor Elliot and Mr. G. Bidder, eldest son of the late Mr. G. P. Bidder, in which it was clearly shown that Mr. Bidder the elder showed marked abilities through life, and possessed a remarkable capacity for taking broad and accurate views of all questions in which he was engaged. On this point (which lies somewhat outside my subject) I need not say more than that the writer in the 'Spectator,' with a frankness which more than atoned for his error, admitted that he had been mistaken. What now concerns us is the evidence adduced respecting Bidder's calculating powers.

In the first place, it had been noticed in the original article, quite correctly, that there was a distinction between Bidder's powers and Colburn's. It is important to notice this. It confirms my view that they adopted different methods. 'Bidder, as Colburn admits,' says the 'Spectator,' after describing some of Colburn's feats, 'was even more remarkable in some ways; he could not extract roots or find factors' (the special class of feats which suggested my theory) 'with so much ease and rapidity as Colburn, but he was more at home in abstruse calculations.'

Next let us consider the way in which Bidder's calculating powers were developed from his childhood, one may almost say his babyhood, onwards to a certain point when the study of other matters prevented their further development and caused them gradually to diminish.

We read that at three years of age, 'Bidder answered wonderful questions about the nails in a horse's four shoes;' but the earliest feat of which I have been able to find exact evidence belongs to his ninth year. When only eight years old, and entirely ignorant of the theory of ciphering, he answered almost instantly and quite correctly, when asked how many farthings there are in 868,424,121l.

A correspondent X. in the 'Spectator,' referring to a somewhat earlier part of Bidder's career as a youthful calculator, says, 'In the autumn of the year 1814, I was reading with a private tutor, the Curate of Wellington, Somersetshire, when a Mr. Bidder called upon him to exhibit the calculating power of his little boy, then about eight years old, who could neither read nor write. On this occasion, he displayed great facility in the mental handling of numbers, multiplying readily and correctly two figures by two, but failing in attempting numbers of three figures. My tutor, a Cambridge man, Fellow of his College, strongly recommended the father not to carry his son about the country, but to have him properly trained at school. This advice was not taken, for about two years after he was brought by his father to Cambridge, and his faculty of mental calculation tested by several able mathematical men. I was present at the examination, and began it

with a sum in simple addition, two rows, with twelve figures in each row. The boy gave the correct answer immediately. Various questions then, of considerable difficulty, involving large numbers, were proposed to him, all of which he answered promptly and accurately. These must have occupied more than an hour. There was then a pause. To test his memory, I then said to him, "Do you remember the sum in addition I gave you?" To my great surprise, he repeated the twenty-four figures with only one or two mistakes.¹ It is evident, therefore, that in the course of two years his powers of memory and calculation must have been gradually developed.

Bidder was unable at this time to explain the process by which he worked out long and intricate sums. He did not appear burdened by his mental calculations. 'As soon as a question was answered,' says X., 'he amused himself with whipping a top round the room, and when the examination was over, he said to us, "You have been trying to puzzle me, I will try to puzzle you. A man found thirteen cats in his garden. He got out his gun, fired at them, and killed seven. How many were left?" "Six," was the answer. "Wrong," he said, "none were left. The rest ran away." I mention this to show that he was a cheerful and playful boy when he was about ten years old, and that his brain was not overtaxed.' It would be curious to inquire whether Bidder was really the inventor of the now time-honoured joke with which he puzzled his examiners. If it had been as well known in 1816 as now, he would hardly have asked a roomful of persons, even though they were college fellows, a question which some one or other of them would have been sure to have heard before. If he really invented the puzzle, it was clever in so young a lad.

The next evidence is more precise. It is given in a letter from Mr. C. S. Osmond, and is derived from an old pamphlet of thirty-four pages, published about the year 1820. From this we learn that when Bidder was ten years old, he answered in two minutes the following question: What is the interest of 4,444*l.* for 4,444 days at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum? The answer is, 2,434*l.* 16*s.* $5\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* A few months later, when he was not yet

¹ This feat is remarkable, because the power of picturing numbers distinctly before the mental eye, and dealing with them as readily as though pen and paper were used, is not necessarily accompanied by the power of retaining such numbers after they are done with; on the contrary, it must be an advantage to the mental calculator to be able to forget all merely accidental groups of numbers, though of course it is equally an advantage to him to be able to retain all numbers which he may have to use again. I have very little doubt myself that the power of selecting things to be forgotten and things to be remembered is a most useful mental faculty; and that those minds work best in the long run which can completely throw off all recollection of useless matters.

eleven years old, he was asked, How long would a cistern 1 mile cube be filling if receiving from a river 120 gallons per minute without intermission? In two minutes he gave the correct answer: 14,300 years, 285 days, 12 hours, 46 minutes. A year later, he divided correctly, in less than a minute, 468,592,413,563 by 9,076. I have tried how long this takes me with pen and paper; and, after getting an incorrect result in one and a quarter minute, went through the sum again, with correct result, (51,629,838 and 5875 over) in about the same time.

At twelve years of age he answered in less than a minute the question, If a distance of $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches is passed over in a second of time, how many inches will be passed over in 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 55 seconds? Much more surprising, however, was his success when thirteen years old, in dealing with the question, What is the cube root of 897,339,273,974,002,153? He obtained the answer in $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, viz. 964,537. I do not believe one arithmetician in a thousand would get out this answer correctly, at a first trial, in less than a quarter of an hour. But I confess I have not tried the experiment, feeling, indeed, perfectly satisfied that I should not get the answer correctly in half a dozen trials.

No date is given to the following case:—‘The question was put by Sir William Herschel, at Slough, near Windsor, to Master Bidder, and answered in one minute: Light travels from the sun to the earth in 8 minutes, and the sun being 98,000,000 of miles off’ (of course this is quite wrong, but sixty years ago it was near enough to the accepted value), ‘if light would take six years and four months travelling at the same rate from the nearest fixed star, how far is that star from the earth, reckoning 365 days and 6 hours to each year, and 28 days to each month?’ The correct answer was quickly given to this pleasing question, viz., 40,633,740,000,000 miles.

On one occasion, we learn, the proposer of a question was not satisfied with Bidder’s answer. The boy said the answer was correct, and requested the proposer to work his sum over again. During the operation Bidder said he felt certain he was right, for he had worked the question in another way; and before the proposer found that he was wrong and Bidder right, the boy told the company that he had calculated the question by a third method.

The pamphlet gives the following extract from a London paper, which, if really based on facts, proves conclusively that Bidder was a more skilful computer than Zerah Colburn:—‘A few days since, a meeting took place between the Devonshire youth, George Bidder, and the American youth, Zerah Colburne’

(sic), 'before a party of gentlemen, to ascertain their calculating comprehensions. The Devonshire boy having answered a variety of questions in a satisfactory way, a gentleman proposed one to Zerah Colburn, viz., If the globe is 24,912 miles in circumference, and a balloon travels 3,878 feet in a minute, how long would it be in travelling round the world? After "nine minutes'" consideration, he felt himself incompetent to give the answer. The same question being given to the Devonshire boy, the answer he returned in two minutes—viz. 23 days, 13 hours, 18 minutes—was received with marks of great applause. Many other questions were proposed to the American boy, all of which he refused answering, while young Bidder replied readily to all. A handsome subscription was collected for the Devonshire youth.' This account seems to me to accord very ill with what is known about Colburn's skill in mental computation. That Bidder could deal more readily with very large numbers was admitted by Colburn. But the problem which Colburn is said to have failed in solving during nine minutes is far easier than some which he is known to have solved in a much shorter time. It should be noted that Colburn was nearly two years older than Bidder.

And now let us consider what we know respecting Bidder's method of computation. On this point, fortunately, the evidence is far clearer than in Colburn's case. Colburn, when asked how he obtained his results, would give very unsatisfactory answers—in one case blurting out the rude remark, 'God put these things into my head; I cannot put them into yours.' Bidder, on the other hand, was ready and able to explain how he worked out his results.

The first point we learn respecting his method seems to accord with the theory advanced by myself in 1875, but it will presently be seen that in Bidder's case that theory cannot possibly be maintained. 'From his earliest years,' we are told by his eldest son, 'he appears to have trained himself to deal with actual objects, instead of figures, at first by using pebbles or nuts to work out his sums. In my opinion,' proceeds Mr. G. Bidder, 'he had an immense power of realising the *actual number*.' However, in multiplying he made use of the ordinary arithmetical process called cross multiplication, by which the product of two numbers is obtained, figure by figure, in a single line. 'He was aided, I think,' says his son, 'by two things: first, a powerful memory of a peculiar cast, in which figures seemed to stereotype themselves without an effort; and secondly, by an almost inconceivable rapidity of operation. I speak with some confidence as to the former of these faculties, as I possess it to a considerable extent

myself (though not to compare with my father). Professor Elliot says he,' meaning Mr. G. P. Bidder, 'saw mental pictures of figures and geometrical diagrams. I always do. If I perform a sum mentally, it always proceeds in a visible form in my mind; indeed, I can conceive no other way possible of doing mental arithmetic.' This, by the way, is a rather strange remark from one possessing so remarkable a power of conception as the younger Bidder. Assuredly another way of working sums in mental arithmetic is common enough; and even if it had not been, it might easily have been conceived. Many, probably most persons, in working sums mentally, retain in their memory the sound of each number involved, not an image of the number in a visible form. Thus, suppose the two numbers 47 and 23 are to be multiplied in the mind. The process will run, with most ordinary calculators, in a verbal manner: thus, three times seven, twenty-one, three times four, twelve and two fourteen—*one four one*. (These digits being repeated mentally as if emphasised, and the mental record of the sound retained to be presently used when the next line is obtained.) Again: twice seven, *fourteen*, twice four, eight and one *nine*—*nine four*. Then the addition mentally thus, *one*, four and four *eight*, nine and one *ten*—*one, nought, eight, one*, the digits of the required product. I happen to know that this is the way in which most persons would work a sum of this kind mentally, retaining each necessary digit by emphasising, so to speak, the mental utterance of the digit's name. Of course the process is altogether inferior to the visual process, so to call that in which mental pictures are formed of the digits representing a number. But not one person in ten has the power of forming such pictures.

Of course, one who, like Bidder, could picture at will any number, or set of numbers, and carry on arithmetical processes with such numbers as freely as though writing on paper, would have a great advantage over a computer using ink and paper. He would be saved, to begin with, all inconvenience from the quality of writing materials, necessity of taking fresh ink, and so forth. The figures would start into existence at once as obtained, instead of requiring a certain time, though short, for writing down. They would also always arrange themselves correctly. But this would be far from being all. Indeed, these advantages are the least of those which mental arithmeticians using the visual method possess over the calculator with pen and paper. The same power of picturing numbers which enables the mental worker to proceed in the confident assurance that every line of a long process of calculation will remain clearly in his mental vision to the end of that process,

enables him to retain a number of results by which all ordinary processes of calculation can be greatly shortened. He may forget in a day or two the details of any given process of calculation, because he not only makes no effort to retain such details, but purposely hastens to forget them. He would, however, be careful to remember any results which might be of use to him in other calculations. The multiplication table, for instance, which with most persons ranges only to the product 12 times 12, and even then is not retained pictorially in the mind, with Bidder ranged probably to 1000 times a 1000, or even farther. This may seem utterly incredible to those unfamiliar with the wonderful tenacity and range of memory possessed by such men as Bidder the arithmetician, Morphy the chess-player, Macaulay the historian, and others, each in their own special line. There is a case in print showing that a much less expert arithmetician than Bidder possessed a much more complete array of remembered numbers than he did—the case, namely, of Alexander Gwin, a native of Derry, one of the boys employed for calculation in the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, who at the age of eight years knew the logarithms of all numbers from 1 to 1000. He could repeat them either in regular order or otherwise. Now, every one of these logarithms (supposing Gwin learned them from tables of the usual form) contains seven digits, and there is no connection between these sets of digits by which the memory can be in any way aided. If young Gwin at eight years old could remember all these numbers, we may well believe that Bidder, who probably possessed an even more powerful memory, retained a far larger array of such numbers.

Thus we can partly understand the marvellous rapidity with which Bidder effected his computations. Professor Elliot says on this point that the extent to which Bidder's arithmetical power was carried was to him 'incomprehensible, as difficult to believe as a miracle. You might read over to him fifteen figures, and another line of the same number, and without seeing or writing down a single figure he would multiply the one by the other, and give the result correctly. The rapidity of his calculations was equally wonderful. Giving his evidence before a parliamentary committee rather quickly and decidedly with regard to a point of some intricacy, the counsel on the other side interrupted him rather testily by saying, "You might as well profess to tell us how many gallons of water flow through Westminster Bridge in an hour." "I can tell you that, too," was the reply, giving the number instantaneously.' This, however, be it remembered, proved rather how retentive Bidder's memory was than how

rapidly he could compute. For either he knew or did not know the precise breadth, depth, and rapidity of the Thames at Westminster Bridge. If he did not know, he could not have made the computation. If he did know, it could only have been because he had had special occasion to inquire, and we cannot readily imagine that any occasion can have existed which would have required the very calculation which Professor Elliot supposes Bidder to have made on the spur of the moment.

Professor Elliot proceeds to remark on the power of Bidder in retaining vivid impressions of numbers, diagrams, &c. 'If he saw or heard a number, it seemed to remain permanently photographed on his brain. In like manner, he could study a complicated diagram without seeing it when walking and apparently listening to a friend talking to him on some other subject.' Every geometer, I imagine, can do this. At least, I know that I have often found myself better able to solve geometrical problems of difficulty when walking with a friend, and really (not apparently only) listening to his conversation, than when alone in my study with pen and paper to delineate diagrams and note down numerical or other results. The diagram so thought of stands out before me, as Professor Elliot says that Bidder's mind-diagrams stood out, 'with all its lines and letters.' The faculty is not, I believe, at all exceptional, though of course the degree in which it was developed in Bidder's case was altogether so.

The process of multiplying a number of fifteen digits by another such number is one which, so far as the ordinary method is concerned, everyone can appreciate. This method is doubtless the best for most arithmeticians, simply because it is one which requires least mental effort in retaining numbers, and also because the operation is one which can be readily corrected. All the fifteen rows of products are present for checking after the process has once been completed on paper. It would be a more difficult process to the mental arithmetician. In fact, I can hardly believe that even Bidder could have retained a clear mental picture of the set of nearly three hundred digits which form the complete 'sum.' At any rate, we know that the method he adopted was one which most persons would find far more difficult, even using pen and paper, but which requires a much smaller effort of memory on the part of the mental arithmetician. The process called cross multiplication is not usually taught in books on arithmetic. This would not be the place to describe it fully. But I may be permitted to give an illustration of the process as applied to two numbers, each of three digits only. Take for these numbers 356 and 428. The arithmetician sets these down in the usual way,

and then writes down the product in one line, figure by figure, beginning with the units' place, so that the sum appears thus :

$$\begin{array}{r} 356 \\ 428 \\ \hline 152368 \end{array}$$

He appears to those unacquainted with the method he uses to be multiplying at once by 428, just as one multiplies at once by 11 or 12. In reality, however, the work runs thus in his mind: Eight times six, forty-eight. (Set down eight and carry four.) Five times eight, forty; twice six, twelve, making fifty-two; and with the carried four, fifty-six. (Set down six and carry five.) Thrice eight, twenty-four; twice five, ten, making thirty-four; four times six, twenty-four, making fifty-eight; and with the carried five, sixty-three. (Set down three and carry six.) Twice three, six; and four times five, twenty, making twenty-six; and with the carried six, thirty-two. (Set down two and carry three.) Lastly, four times three, twelve; making with the carried three, fifteen—which being set down completes the product.

To make a comparison between this method and the ordinary method I have set them side by side, as actually worked out; for of course there is no essential reason why the cross-method should be carried out without keeping record of the various products employed. Besides, by thus presenting the cross-process we are able to see better what a task Bidder had to accomplish when he multiplied together mentally two numbers, each containing fifteen digits. The processes then stand thus :

$$\begin{array}{r} 356 \\ 428 \\ \hline 2848 \\ 712 \\ 1424 \\ \hline 152368 \end{array}$$

The common process of multiplication.

$$\begin{array}{r} 356 \\ 428 \\ \hline 48 \\ 40 \\ 12 \\ \hline 24 \\ 10 \\ 24 \\ \hline 6 \\ 20 \\ 12 \\ \hline 152368 \end{array}$$

Cross-multiplication.

It is to be observed that in the case of large numbers we do not get more troublesome products in the course of the work when cross-multiplying than in the case of small numbers, like those above dealt with. We get more such products, that is all. Thus in the middle of the above case of cross-multiplication we have three pro-

ducts of two digits each. In the middle of a case of cross-multiplication with two numbers of fifteen digits we should have fifteen such products—at least, products not containing more than two digits. We should also have, if working mentally, a large number carried over from the next preceding process. This we should have even if we were working out the result on paper, but not writing down the various products used in getting the result. To most persons this would prove an effectual bar to the employment of the cross-method, especially as there would be no way of detecting an error without going through the whole work again. It is true this has to be done when the common method is employed. But in this method if an error exists we can recognise where it is. In the other, unless we recollect what our former steps were, we have no means of knowing where an error arose. And quite commonly it would happen that two different errors, one in the original process, and another in the work of checking, would give the same erroneous result, so that we should mistakenly infer that result to be correct.¹ But to the mental arithmetician, especially when long-continued practice has enabled him to work accurately as well as quickly, the cross method is far the most convenient. We know that this was the method applied by Bidder. And to explain his marvellous rapidity we have only to take into account the influence of long practice combined with altogether exceptional aptitude for dealing with numbers.

Of the effect of practice in some arithmetical processes curious evidence was afforded by the feats of a Chinese who visited America in 1875. He was simply a trained computer, asserting that hundreds in China were trained to equal readiness in arithmetical processes, and that among those thus trained those of exceptional abilities far surpassed himself in dexterity. Among the various tests applied during a platform exhibition of his powers was one of the following nature. About thirty numbers of four digits each were named to him, as fast as a quick writer could take them down. When all had been given he was told to add them, mentally, while a practised arithmetician was to add them on paper. ‘It is unnecessary for me to add them,’ he said, ‘I have done that as you gave them to me; the total is—so-and-so.’ It presently appeared that the total thus given was quite correct.

At first sight such a feat seems astounding. Yet in reality it

¹ This happens frequently in mercantile computations. Thus a clerk may add a column of figures incorrectly, then check his work by adding the same column in another way (say in one case from the top, in the other from the foot): yet both results will not uncommonly agree, though the incorrect result is obtained in the two several cases by different mistakes.

is but a slight modification of what many bankers' clerks can readily accomplish. They will take an array of numbers, each of four or five figures, and cast them up in one operation. Grant them only the power of as readily adding a number *named* as a number *seen* to a total already obtained, and their feat would be precisely that of the Chinese arithmetician. There can be no doubt that, with a very little practice, nine-tenths, if not all, of the clerks who can achieve one feat would be able to achieve the other feat also.

I do not know how clerks who add at once a column of four-figured numbers together accomplish the task. That is to say, I do not know the mental process they go through in obtaining their final result. It may be that they keep the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands apart in their mind, counting them properly at the end of the summation; or, on the other hand, they may treat each successive number as a whole, and keep the gradually growing total as a whole. Or some may follow one plan, and some the other. When I heard of the Chinese arithmetician's feats, my ~~explanation~~ ^{impression} was that he adopted the former plan. I should myself, if I wanted to acquire readiness in such processes, adopt that plan, applying it after a fashion suggested by my method of computing when I was a boy. I should picture the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands as objects of different sorts. Say the units as dots, the tens as lines, the hundreds as discs, the thousands as squares. When a number of four digits was named to me, I should see so many squares, discs, lines, and dots. When the next number of four digits was named, I should *see* my sets of squares, discs, lines, and dots correspondingly increased. When a new number was named these sets would be again correspondingly increased. And so on, until there were several hundreds of squares, of discs, of lines, and of dots. These (when the last number had been named) could be at once transmuted into a number, which would be the total required.

Take for instance the numbers, 7234, 9815, 9127, 4183. When the first was named the mind's eye would picture 7 squares, 2 discs, 3 lines, and 4 dots. When the second (9815) was named there would be seen 16 squares, 10 discs, 4 lines, and 9 dots. After the third (9127), there would be 25 squares, 11 discs, 6 lines, and 16 dots; after the fourth (4183), there would be 29 squares, 12 discs, 14 lines, and 19 dots. This being all, the total is at once run off from the units' place; the 19 dots give 9 for the units, one 10 to add to the 14 lines (each representing ten), making 15, so that 5 is the digit in the tens' place, while 100 is added to the 12 discs or hundreds, giving 13 or 3 in the hundreds' place,

and 1,000 to add to the 29 squares or thousands, making 30, or for the total 30,359. The process has taken many words in describing, but each part of it is perfectly simple, the mental picturing of the constantly increasing numbers of squares, discs, lines, and dots being almost instantaneous (in the case, of course, of those only who possess the power of forming these mental pictures). The final process is equally simple, and would be so even if the number of squares, discs, lines, and dots were great. Thus, suppose there were 324 squares, 411 discs, 391 lines, and 433 dots. We take 3 for *units*, carrying 43 lines or 434 in all, whence 4 for the *tens*, carrying 43 discs or 444 in all, whence 4 for the hundreds, carrying 44 squares or 468 in all, whence finally 468,443 is the total required.

We can understand then how easy to Bidder must have been the summation of the fifteen products of cross multiplication to the carried remainder—they would be added consecutively in far less time than the quickest penman could write them down. Probably they would be obtained as well as added in less time than they could be written down. Thus digit after digit of the result of what appears a tremendous sum in multiplication would be obtained with that rapidity which to many seemed almost miraculous. We must further take into account a circumstance pointed out by Mr. G. Bidder. ‘The faculty of rapid operation,’ he says, speaking of his father’s wonderful feats in this respect, ‘was no doubt congenital, but it was developed by incessant practice and by the confidence thereby acquired. I am certain,’ he proceeds, ‘that unhesitating confidence is half the battle. In mental arithmetic, it is most true that “he who hesitates is lost.” When I speak of incessant practice, I do not mean deliberate drilling of set purpose; but with my father, as with myself,¹ the mental handling of numbers or playing with figures afforded a positive pleasure and constant occupation of leisure moments. Even up to the last year of his

¹ Mr. G. Bidder’s powers as a mental arithmetician would be considered astonishing if the achievements of his father and others were not known. ‘I myself,’ he says, can perform pretty extensive arithmetical operations mentally, but I cannot pretend to approach even distantly to the rapidity and accuracy with which my father worked. I have occasionally multiplied 15 figures by 15 in my head, but it takes me a long time, and I am liable to occasional errors. Last week, after speaking to Prof. Elliot, I tried the following sum to see if I could still do it :

$$\begin{array}{r} 378,201,969,513,825 \\ 199,631,057,265,413 \end{array}$$

and I got, in my head, the answer, 75,576,299,427,512,145,197,597,834,725; in which I think, if you take the trouble to work it out, you will find 4 figures out of the 29 are wrong.’ I have only run through the cross-multiplication far enough to detect the first error, which is in the digit representing thousands of millions. This should be 4 not 7.

life (his age was seventy-two) my father took delight in working out long and difficult arithmetical problems.'

We must always remember, in considering such feats as Bidder and other 'calculating boys' accomplished, that the power of mentally picturing numbers is in their case far greater than we are apt to imagine such a power can possibly be. Precisely as the feats of a Morphy seem beyond belief till actually witnessed, and even then (especially to those who know what *his* chess-play meant) almost miraculous, so the mnemonic powers of some arithmeticians would seem incredible if they had not been tested, and even as witnessed seem altogether marvellous. Colburn tells us that a notorious free-thinker who had seen his arithmetical achievements at the age of six, 'went home much disturbed, passed a sleepless night, and ever afterwards renounced infidel opinions.' 'And this,' says the writer in the 'Spectator,' from whom I have already quoted, 'was only one illustration of the vague feeling of awe and open-mouthed wonder, which his performances excited. People came to consult him about stolen spoons; and he himself **evidently** thought that there was something decidedly uncanny, something supernatural, about his gift.'

But so far as actual mnemonic arithmetical power is concerned, the feats of Colburn, and even of Bidder, have been surpassed. Consider, for instance, the following instances of the strong power of abstraction possessed by Dr. Wallis :—'December 22, 1669.—In a dark night in bed,' he says in a letter to his friend, Mr. Thomas Smith, B.D., Fellow of Magdalen College, 'without pen, ink or paper, or anything equivalent, I did by memory extract the square root of 30000,00000,00000,00000,00000,00000,00000,00000,00000,00000, which I found to be 1,77205,08075,68077,29353, *ferè*, and did the next day commit it to writing.'

And again: 'February 18, 1670.—Johannes Georgius Pelschower (Regiomontanus Borussus) giving me a visit, and desiring an example of the like, I did that night propose to myself in the dark, without help to my memory, a number in 53 places: 24681357910121411131516182017192122242628302325272931, of which I extracted the square root in 27 places: 157103016871482805817152171 *proximè*; which numbers I did not commit to paper till he gave me another visit, March following, when I did from memory dictate them to him.' Mr. E. W. Craigie, commenting on these feats, says that they 'are not perhaps as difficult as multiplying 15 figures by 15, for while of course it is easy to remember such a number as three thousand billion trillions, being nothing but noughts, so also it may be noticed that there is a certain order in the row of 53 figures; the numbers follow each other in little

sets of arithmetical progression (2, 4, 6, 8), (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), (10, 12, 14), (11, 13, 15), (16, 18, 20), and so on; not regularly, but still enough to render it an immense assistance to a man engaged in a mental calculation. A row of 53 figures set down at hazard would have been much more difficult to remember, like Foote's famous sentence with which he puzzled the quack mnemonician; but still we must give the doctor the credit for remembering the answer.' Mr. Craigie seems to overlook the circumstance that remembering the original number, and remembering the answer, in cases of this kind, are utterly unimportant feats compared with the work of obtaining the answer. If any one will be at the pains to work out the problem of extracting the square root of any number in 53 places, he will see that it would be a very small help indeed to have the original number written down before him, if the solution was to be worked out mnemonically. Probably in both cases, Wallis took easily remembered numbers, not to help him at the time, but so that if occasion required he might be able to recall the problem months or years after he had solved it. Anyone who could work out in his mind such a problem as the second of those given above, would have no difficulty in remembering an array of two or three hundred figures set down entirely at random.

I have left small space in which to consider the singular evidence given by Prof. Elliot and Mr. G. Bidder respecting the transmission in the Bidder family of that special mental quality on which the elder Bidder's arithmetical power was based. Hereafter I may take occasion to discuss this evidence more at length, and with particular reference to its bearing on the question of hereditary genius. Let it suffice to mention here that, although Mr. G. Bidder and other members of the family have possessed in large degree the power of dealing mentally with large numbers, yet in other cases, though the same special mental quality involved has been present, the way in which that quality has shown itself has been altogether different. Thus Mr. G. Bidder states that his father's eldest brother, 'who was a Unitarian minister, was not remarkable as an arithmetician; but he had an extraordinary memory for Biblical texts, and could quote almost any text in the Bible, and give chapter and verse.' A granddaughter of G. P. Bidder's once said to Prof. Elliot, 'Isn't it strange: when I hear anything remarkable said or read to me, I think I see it in print?' Mr. G. Bidder 'can play two games of chess simultaneously,' Prof. Elliot mentions, 'without seeing the board.' 'Several of Mr. G. P. Bidder's nephews and grandchildren,' he adds, 'possess also very remarkable powers. One of his nephews at an early age showed a degree of mechanical ingenuity beyond anything I had

ever seen in a boy. The summer before last, to test the calculating powers of some of his grandchildren (daughters of Mr. G. Bidder, the barrister), I gave them a question which I scarcely expected any of them to answer. I asked them, "At what point in the scale do Fahrenheit's thermometer and the Centigrade show the same number at the same temperature?" The nature of the two scales had to be explained, but after that they were left to their own resources. The next morning one of the younger ones (about ten years old) came to tell me it was at 40 degrees below zero. This was the correct answer; she had worked it out in bed.'

Philip Astley.

IN years gone by, there was not a more famous and popular place of amusement in all London than Astley's Amphitheatre ; it was there that, when Kit Nubbles resolved upon a dramatic treat, he took his mother and Barbara ; it was there Colonel Newcome took the children to see the Battle of Waterloo, and laughed so at Mr. Merriman's jokes, and was so amazed at the prodigious likeness of the principal actor to the Emperor Napoleon. It was the favourite holiday resort of the working classes, the paradise of children of all classes ; country cousins were as eager to visit the wonderful circus as they were to go to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and it is very doubtful whether in their secret minds they were not more deeply impressed by 'the fiery untamed steeds,' the stentor-lunged tyrants and heroes, the lovely, persecuted, but strong-minded heroines of the equestrian drama, than by the legitimate glories of the patent houses. Those amongst us who are old enough may recall our own sensations of delight at the deliciously mixed perfume of sawdust, gas, and stale orange-peel which greeted us upon our entrance into that temple of enchantment ; our raptures at the looking-glass and gilding, and the brilliant lights ; our trembling expectancy of the wonders hidden behind that mystic curtain ; our roars of laughter at the antics of the clowns, whom we regarded as beings of superhuman wit ; our open-mouthed wonder at the 'highly trained' horses ; our rapturous admiration of the lovely riders in muslin skirts, who jumped through hoops and vaulted over ribbons. Alas, the new generation, even if such sensations were possible to their superior and *blasé* babyhood, can never know the full flavour of these delights, for the glories of Astley's house are faded : they were buried beneath the ruins of 'The Theatre Royal Westminster.' It breaks out into an equestrian pantomime at Christmas, it is true ; but as a British institution it exists no longer : as such it is dead, dead as a door-nail.

A famous man in his day, and with a fame not wholly confined within his circle, was Philip Astley, the founder of the Amphitheatre. His early life promised few eventualities ; he was brought up to his father's trade of cabinet-maker ; but, a quarrel taking place between him and his parent, he quitted his native town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, where he was born in 1742, and, proceeding to Coventry, enlisted in General Elliott's famous troop of Light Horse. Going abroad, he served in the German wars,

and, a stalwart fellow of six feet odd, distinguished himself as a brave and excellent soldier. He was very fond of horses, made a study of their characters, and took great delight in breaking them in and teaching them tricks, until at length the idea occurred to him to make the training of them a profession. About the time of the regiment returning to England, three men, named Price, Johnson, and Old Sampson, had acquired some celebrity in this business, and used to exhibit performing horses in various parts of London. There was one place in particular, the 'Three Hats' at Islington, where 'The Jubilee Gardens,' which were surrounded with refreshment boxes, were formed into an amphitheatre, and thither Philip Astley went to study the tricks, to make the acquaintance of 'the professors,' and worm out their secrets.

Soon afterwards he obtained his discharge from the army, as a reward for good conduct, to which the General further added the gift of a horse, who thereafter figured as a celebrated quadruped actor, of whom more anon. Astley now started as a showman in a field near a thoroughfare called Glover's Halfpenny Hatch, formed a ring with rope and stakes, and went round with the hat; then he travelled about the country exhibiting after the same manner. After a time he returned to London and opened what he called a Riding School, upon a piece of ground on which the Waterloo terminus now stands. For a time both the ring and the auditorium were uncovered, until, finding but scant audiences on wet evenings, he erected sheds, for which an extra price of admission was charged. He also performed in a large room, No. 22 Piccadilly, where he exhibited 'Chinese shadows,' fireworks, learned dogs, conjuring horses who danced minuets and hornpipes, &c. In 1770 he took upon lease a piece of waste ground near Westminster Bridge, upon which an old man had been used to breed pheasants, and opened a new riding school; but the ring was still open and the seats only partly covered. At first he performed without a license, and proceedings were commenced against him. One day, however, the King happened to cross Westminster Bridge on a horse that proved perfectly unmanageable. Astley, who was looking on, came to his Majesty's assistance, and soon rendered the brute docile. For this service he received a license a few days afterwards.


It was not until 1780 that he erected a regular and roofed-in building, with two tiers of boxes, a pit and a gallery. The way he obtained his building materials is characteristic of the man: At the close of an election, it was usual for the mob to make bonfires of the hustings. An election taking place about this time, Astley offered to give beer to all who would bring the wood to him instead of burning it. With this, and some old scaffolding, he completed his

Amphitheatre. The following is an abridged copy of one of the earliest bills :—

WINTER'S EVENINGS' AMUSEMENTS.

On Monday the 27th, and Wednesday the 29th instant (November 1780) will be presented at the Amphitheatre Riding House, Westminster Bridge, a great variety of pleasing New Feats of Activity and Agility on Foot and Horseback. The whole under the direction of Mr. Astley. Notwithstanding the many improvements, no additional price in the admittance. Box, 2s. 6d.; Upper Box, 1s. 6d.; Pit, 1s.; Side Gallery, 6d. Doors to be opened at half-past five, to begin at half-past six precisely.

Part the First: 'The Ombres Chinoises, or Lilliputian World,' with many scenes and other decorations. Part the Second: Horsemanship on a single horse, by Mr. Taylor, being his first appearance; also Mrs. Taylor, a young lady from Vienna, will perform several feats of horsemanship on a single horse, being her first appearance. Part the Third: The Little Conjuring Horse will go through his different exercises in a very surprising manner. Part the Fourth: Tricks of Strength and Agility, by the celebrated Mrs. Richer, equilibrist, etc. Part the Fifth: Horsemanship on two horses. Part the Sixth: The Polander's Tricks on chairs, tables, pedestals, ladders, etc. Part the Seventh: Lofty vaulting and manly agility, commonly called tumbling, over horses, through hoops, over men's heads, tables, chairs, etc. Part the Eighth: Horsemanship on two horses by the celebrated Master Astley, the greatest performer that ever appeared in any age, and as a horseman stands unparalleled by all nations. Part the Ninth: New Pyramids, or men piled upon men, with new dresses and other decorations. Part the Tenth: Slack Rope vaulting, by Mr. Dawson. Part the Eleventh: An equilibrium on the perpendicular moving ladder; after which the Beautiful Zebra will walk round the Riding School for the inspection of the nobility, gentry, and others. To describe the beauties of the Zebra would be much too large for a newspaper, etc.

 The Zebra to be sold for 400 guineas. The whole to conclude with several uncommon and pleasing feats of great agility, by Master Astley, who in a most amazing equilibrium, whilst the horse is in 'gallop,' dances and vaults, etc., also plays an air on the violin, and displays a flag in many comic attitudes which have never been exhibited, or even thought of, by any horseman in Europe, etc., etc.

Very soon the Amphitheatre grew quite famous; we find mention made of it in Boswell's 'Johnson,' and in Horace Walpole's Letters; and after a time the performances became more ambitious in their nature, for the bills of 1787 announce musical pieces and ballets in addition to the other attractions. Indeed, there was a poet kept upon the establishment. It would seem, however, that the post was neither dignified nor lucrative, and Mr. Oakman—such was the name of this disciple of Apollo—had failings which put him at a disadvantage. One day, having written a piece, he brought it to the manager and requested an advance of a guinea, in consideration of which he was willing to permit such alterations and excisions as his employer might think necessary. Astley

glanced at the roll of MS., and, after making the remark that a pruning knife, and not a pen and ink, was required, proceeded to mercilessly cut and slash it. Having reduced the effusion by about a third, he turned to the poet and said, 'If you'll promise not to get drunk, you shall have the guinea.' Of course the poet promised he would not, and pocketed the money; but as he went away he took revenge for the slaughter of his bantling by writing with chalk upon the managerial door, 'Mangling done here.'

By-and-by the patent theatres, growing jealous of the success of the Amphitheatre, began to interfere with the winter performances. Astley then went over to Paris, and built an amphitheatre (afterwards Franconi's) in the Faubourg du Temple. Young Astley performed before Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, was presented by their majesties with a gold medal set with diamonds, and received from them the name of the English Rose, in distinction from Vestris, the celebrated dancer, whom they called the French Rose. When the Revolution broke out, the building was taken possession of by the revolutionary tribunal and turned into barracks; but when Bonaparte became first consul, Astley's rights were restored, and compensation was made him for his losses. In 1793 this indefatigable caterer for public amusements introduced circus performances into Ireland, as he had into London and Paris, and built a third amphitheatre in Peter Street, Dublin. The next year the building in the Westminster Bridge Road was burned to the ground. He was in France at the time, and of course hurried home immediately on receiving the disastrous news. Calling the company together, he addressed them with—'Now, girls and boys, we must begin again; no deserters among you, I hope; stick by me: I'll give you all half salaries till we commence once more; and if any of you wish to take benefits, I'll do what I can for you.' For a time he gave performances at the Lyceum Theatre, and within seven months the new house was built and opened. Nine years afterwards, in 1803, the building was again consumed by fire. Scarcely were the ruins cold when he once more set about the re-erection, superintending the work himself. Early and late, in frost and snow, hail, rain, sunshine, he was always there, drilling the men at their work as though he were the sergeant of a regiment. This, the second Amphitheatre raised upon the same spot, was opened on Easter Monday, 1804.

Like a very Alexander, however, he still craved for new kingdoms, and in 1805 took the lease of a piece of ground, upon which old Craven House stood, at the north-west end of Wych Street. No sooner were the documents signed and sealed than he proceeded to collect workmen from the neighbouring public-houses and set

them to work. A little before this he had bought an old prize French man-of-war, that was to be broken up, the 'Ville de Paris,' or the 'Wheel de Pary,' as he called it. The masts, yards, and bowsprits were turned into beams and uprights for his new theatre, the planks were laid down for the stage, even the sails and tarpaulins were turned to account; the roof was formed of tin plates. Every day, from morning till night, he was to be seen in front of the works seated in a little one-horse chaise, constructed to exactly fit his portly form. The new building was called the Olympic Pavilion. There was only one tier of boxes, the pit surrounded the circle, and at the back of this, parted off by an iron grating, was the gallery. There was no orchestra, the musicians being placed in two stage boxes opposite to each other.

But the new speculation was a failure from the first, and Astley soon became desirous of getting rid of it. He sent circulars round to the different theatres describing its advantages.

'We'll throw the bone, Johnny,' he said to his son, 'and let the dogs fight for it; some one will snap at it.' The dog who snapped at it was William Robert Elliston, who, although lessee of half-a-dozen theatres already, seized upon the offer, and purchased the property for three thousand guineas, and an annuity to Astley of one hundred more. Long before this Philip had taken his son and three or four others into partnership in the Westminster Amphitheatre, and his health failing about this time his physicians advised him to go to France. He took up his abode in Paris, in a house of his own, close to his circus, where he died on October 20, 1814, at the age of seventy-two. By a strange coincidence, his son died in the same house, in the same bed, on October 19, 1821.

Although his speculations were generally successful—by one famous melodrama, 'The Blood Red Knight,' he cleared 18,000*l.*—Philip Astley does not seem to have died worth much money. Yet he was a man of indefatigable industry and energy, and he expected the same qualities in those under his employ. 'Come, boys, go to work; we must have a new piece out on Monday night,' he said one day, late in the week. 'That is impossible, sir,' replied the carpenter. 'Who's Mr. Impossible?' retorted Astley; 'I don't know him; he don't live in this house.' At one time the greater portion of his company, and that the best, deserted him, with the expressed intention of ruining his establishment; but he was equal to the occasion. 'When Mr. Garrick died,' he said, 'the public thought the stage would die with him, but they was mistook: it did as well after him as with him, and so it will be with me; for though I've lost talent, I can rear more, and the mill must go.'

When the war with France broke out in 1793, Astley went

over with the Duke of York, as a volunteer, to superintend the horses, and he proved himself a soldiers' friend. He took with him a large chest with bits of broadcloth, thread, needles, leather, bristles, wax, and other odds and ends likely to be useful in a campaign, together with five hundred flannel jackets, in the corner of each of which was sewn a bright new shilling, which, he said, would be a friend in need for the poor fellows when they were hard up and wanted something to drink. All the company of the Amphitheatre gave something towards this, the ladies making the jackets. During a retreat he succeeded in saving a piece of ordnance, and was rewarded by the Duke with the present of four horses. These he put up to auction, and spent the proceeds of the sale in treating the men of his division. Upon his return to England he had the honour of escorting Prince Ernest, afterwards Duke of Cumberland; and the Duke of York gave him a letter to the Queen, recommending him as a bold soldier and a deserving veteran. All his comrades were admitted gratis to his entertainment, and special seats on each side the entrance to the ring were placed for their accommodation. This, it may be remarked, was a profitable piece of generosity, since people flocked in crowds to see these brave warriors.

When he was in want of horses, Astley would buy four or five at Smithfield, seldom giving more than five pounds apiece for them. He cared little for shape, colour, or breed; good temper was their chief recommendation. He certainly achieved some wonderful results by his training. But his greatest success was with the horse he first started with, the present of General Elliott. Billy—such was the name the quadruped delighted in—would, it is said, take off his own saddle, wash his feet in a pail of water, take a kettle of boiling water off the fire, carry a complete tea equipage, and perform the part of waiter to the company. Once his master was prevailed upon to lend Billy for a few days to a brother showman, a friend of his, named Saunders. Immediately afterwards this man's effects were seized and sold for debt; and, Astley knowing nothing of this, Billy went with the rest, and all trace was lost of him. About three years afterwards, as two of the equestrian actors were walking through an East-end thoroughfare, one suddenly exclaimed to the other, pointing to a horse and cart: 'I say, Jack, I'm a Dutchman if that ain't our Billy.' 'Impossible!' answered the other. 'I tell you it is; I'll try him.' Astley taught his horses by certain *signs*—one of these was clicking the nails of his forefinger and thumb. This experiment was now tried, and at the sound the horse pricked up his ears and began to caper. His identity was

at once established; the two actors embraced their old friend with delight, and he testified his pleasure at the meeting by capering and rubbing his head against them. The owner was found in an adjoining public-house, a bargain was struck, and Billy was transferred to the actors. 'He's a monstrous good-tempered cretur,' said the man, 'but he's got such odd antics we always call him the Mountebank.' Billy was received by his old master with tears of joy, and the next night was taking off his kettle of boiling water, and handing round his tea-tray, with all his old dexterity. The horse lived to the extraordinary age of forty-two, and survived his master; when he was too old for work, he was kept in his stable, and allowed two quartern loaves a day; and upon his death a portion of his skin was used to cover a 'big drum.'

The glories of the old house were well sustained after the younger Astley's death by his successor Davis, who was, however, guilty of the heresy of changing the name to Davis's Amphitheatre. The famous Ducrow was the next proprietor, and under his rule the building was, in 1841, burned, for the third time, to the ground. In that same year it was again rebuilt, by William Batty, a name that will call up many delightful reminiscences of childhood to some of our readers; and with him closes the chronicle.

Sharing the fate of all other institutions, great and small, 'Astley's' at length fell upon evil days. Whether the clowns were duller than those of yore, the 'scenes in the circle' less amusing, the daring feats of horsemanship less exciting, or whether we must ascribe the falling off of public patronage to the proverbial fickleness of public taste, it would be difficult to pronounce; but in 1863 circus performances were discontinued, and the building, being remodelled by Mr. Dion Boucicault, was reopened as the Theatre Royal Westminster, with what success is still within the memory of all persons interested in things theatrical.

H. BARTON BAKER.

Donna Quixote.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

CHAPTER XVI.

‘I WILL DISCOURSE WITH MY PHILOSOPHER.’

It was Sunday; the bells were clinking and chiming for the churchgoers all over London, and were making their jangle heard even in Gabrielle's sheltered little demesne. With the smell of the leaves and the rustle of the branches all around her, Gabrielle found the echoes of the bells blend and lose themselves in sweet vague memories of delicious summer Sundays long ago—her ‘long ago’—in the country, when the air was so soft and quiet that the crow of some distant cock seemed as if it might have roused all the world from sleep. Few sensations can be more sweet and tantalising than that sudden illusion of the country in the midst of London; it is like the breath of the west wind that on a soft, mild winter day deludes and delights one for a moment with the thought that spring has come.

Gabrielle felt in a mood to be very happy. She began to think of late that she had not been living in vain. She had, however, for some time been haunted by the thought of Claudia Lemuel, whom she had promised to visit some Sunday; and now this was a Sunday.

Gabrielle was one of that rare class of beings, sometimes found rather trying by their friends, with whom a promise given is a conscientious burden, and almost a physical torment, until it be fairly redeemed.

‘I must go to see Miss Lemuel to-day: I cannot neglect her any longer,’ Gabrielle said. ‘Will you come, Gertrude? Don't, if you don't like—you are not bound; but I promised, and I am really anxious to see her, and to hear what she can have to say about her philosophy and all the rest of it: it may do one good. Besides, her mother has gone, and the poor girl is all alone. One must feel for her.’

‘If that old woman were my mother,’ the gracious Gertrude said, ‘I should feel very much obliged to her for taking herself off anywhere and leaving me to myself.’

‘Ah, but then she is her mother——’

‘Yes, that's the nuisance of it; if she weren't, one might get rid of her.’

‘Then you don’t care to come?’ Gabrielle said, a little discouraged; ‘well, I feel bound to go, Gertrude.’

‘Oh, I should like to go very much,’ Miss Elvin said hastily. She could not by any means afford to seem regardless of Gabrielle’s wishes just yet. ‘But I fancied my brother would call to see me to-day—he would call about five; we could hardly be back so soon, perhaps? but he may not be able to come.’

‘Your brother, Gertrude? Wait for your brother, by all means. That is much better for you than going to see Miss Lemuel. You are not pledged to her at all.’

It was settled that Miss Elvin was to remain at home on the chance of her brother calling. Miss Elvin did not really expect her brother, but she was lazy, and hated the thought of going to be bored by Miss Lemuel; and besides she had a faint hope that Mr. Walter Taxal might put in an appearance that day, and it would be very satisfactory to have him all to herself. She felt very free and hopeful, then, when Gabrielle had fairly gone out of the place.

Miss Elvin was on one of her not infrequent visits to Gabrielle. She was one of the sources of Gabrielle’s recent happiness, for Gabrielle was able to believe that she had helped to open a career for the child of song.

The introduction to Lady Honeybell had been to Miss Elvin like the piece of lead which the philosophical experimentalist hands to the poor man in the ‘Arabian Nights,’ and out of which come all the chances that bring high fortune. She sang at Lady Honeybell’s parties, she sang at other parties, she was invited to sing everywhere; she was becoming the songstress of the season in private life; she was well paid and liberally complimented. An eminent and fashionable artist pronounced her beautiful after the true form of beauty, and several young men who had thought her an ugly little girl before, raved about her peerless charms from that moment. She only sang in private, and said that was all she intended to do; although in her secret heart she still cherished high above almost every other ambition the longing to come out on the stage of the grand opera and make a splendid success there, and see the whole town at her feet. This was almost her highest ambition, but there was one still higher, and that was to be married to a man with position and money. She was a very shrewd little person, and seeing that success in opera did not by any means depend so much upon the patronage of a select few as upon the critics and the ‘great big stupid public,’ she was well content to try her chance for a season or two in private. If during that time she could induce a *man of position* to fall in love with her, he would be very much

more likely to marry her, she thought, than if she had actually made her appearance on the stage. Meantime, she had made her brother give up the Camberwell residence and take a bedroom in one of the small West-end streets, where there could be a room also for her at any time when she needed such shelter. But for the present she had little need of it. She lived at Lady Honeybell's or at Gabrielle's, or at the house of any other lady who chose to ask her to spend a few days. She had in fact thrown herself upon the world to be protected, cared for, and sheltered; and the world, as is its lazy wont, had accepted the trust unquestioning, and protected, cared for, and sheltered her. It is marvellous how much of this duty a certain class of being can calmly impose upon other people. The person who undertakes such a part must have a genius for it; training will not do, nor will any amount of patient resolve enable him or her to acquire the art to whom it has not been the spontaneous gift of bountiful nature. A shy man might as well try to teach himself to be at once pushing and easy as one who has not Miss Elvin's faculty go about to acquire the knack of it.

Miss Elvin had set her heart especially on Walter Taxal. There was much about him which would have suited her exactly. He was the son of a lord; he was called 'the Honourable;' his wife would be 'the Honourable Mrs. Taxal.' He was not dependent on a younger brother's allowance—she had found out that he had money from his mother; he was fond of music, and naturally he would have musical parties at his house, when he was married, and he would be proud of his wife's singing; assuming of course that that happy being could sing. Between her and the possible realisation of this ambition, Miss Elvin saw one barrier, and that was the person of the all-unsuspecting Gabrielle Vanthorpe. Miss Elvin had made up her mind that Gabrielle was anxious to become the Honourable Mrs. Taxal; the way she went on to that unfortunate young man, Miss Elvin said to herself, was quite shocking. He must surely see it, she thought; but then young men were so weak sometimes, and this one young man was so goodnatured that she greatly feared the audacious arts of Gabrielle Vanthorpe might fail to meet with their just discomfiture.

Professor Elvin was in a certain sense a confidant of his sister's plans and hopes. At least, if she did not tell him of her own designs on Mr. Taxal and ask directly for his sympathy, she told him of Gabrielle's designs on that youth and appealed for his reprobation; and Professor Elvin understood, and gave his best hopes and wishes accordingly. It should be mentioned, perhaps, that he now began to think of dropping the title of Professor. Not long since, it was his ambition to be thus always addressed: but ambition's goal of

yesterday is the starting-point it longs to leave behind to-day, and Elvin now would rather have the professorship forgotten altogether. He had sometimes, when meeting military men, spoken of himself as a brother in arms. This was a modest playfulness on his part. He talked of himself to guardsmen as a brother in arms with gentle deprecating vanity, inasmuch as he taught one branch of the general profession of arms which they followed, but now he was a little inclined to allow the brotherhood of arms to become a closer kinship. He began to be under the impression that he had at some time held Her Majesty's commission. This is a favourite illusion of a certain class of actors, and it now became a cherished article of faith with Mr. Elvin. He looked forward to becoming Captain Elvin in course of time. If unhappily he had not made the acquaintance of Gabrielle in the days when the professorship was a self-conferred honour, and insisted on its recognition, he would have been Captain Elvin to her all at once.

Meanwhile Gabrielle has found Claudia Lemuel at home.

Claudia lived, as she had told Gabrielle, in chambers. She did not live in lodgings, but in chambers. The chambers were in one of the newer streets in the neighbourhood of Buckingham Palace. They were on one of the higher ranges of a building occupied as to the ground-floor by the legation of a small foreign state; and as to the upper stages by an artist or two, a mysterious wine company or two, and a foreign dress-maker who professed a new principle—and of course by Claudia Lemuel. Claudia's chambers consisted of a sitting-room, a kitchen, and three bedrooms. Two of the bedrooms were for the young persons whom Claudia called her friends and whom other mortals would have called maid-servants. It was part of Claudia's principles that the two girls must be on an absolute equality with her as regards meals and sleeping accommodation. One of the two women was a faithful friend and follower of Mrs. Lemuel, and had got to understand Claudia's ways; the other was the sixth or seventh newcomer on whom the principles of equality and Claudia's own special pessimism had been tried in succession without any good effect in the way of the exaltation of character. One young person had taken first to wearing and afterwards to pawning Claudia's petticoats and stockings, and when remonstrated with argued rather saucily that Claudia told her one was as good as another in that place, and she didn't mind for her part Claudia's borrowing her petticoats and stockings if she liked. Claudia thought there was something in the argument, but had to dismiss her all the same. Another girl got into the way of going out at *night and not coming back until the following morning.* Two

or three gave instant warning on being told that Claudia's principles forbade any beer. One came home one afternoon rather excited, and replied to Claudia's appeal about the lowering of the dignity of womanhood by brandishing a carving-knife, and the police had to be invited to intervene.

Gabrielle was lucky enough to reach the chambers for the first time while there was a new girl fresh from the country on trial, who had not yet been found wanting. No other visitor had yet arrived, and Gabrielle had time to exchange a few words with Claudia, to ask about Claudia's mother and hear that she had started on her tour, and then to speak of other things.

'What pretty furniture you have!' Gabrielle said. 'All of the same white wood. What is that pretty white wood?'

'Common white deal,' Claudia answered, delighted to have an opportunity of explaining. 'The cheapest deal. I have had everything made for myself, everything in the room. It is a principle of mine.'

'To have everything made for yourself?'

'Oh, no, but to have everything made on the principle of truth. No paint, no varnish, no table-covers, no chair-covers, no imitation of anything. What is beauty? Utility. What is utility? That which, while best serving its purpose, is the cheapest and easiest to procure. You will ask me why not solid oak or ebony? Because they do not combine the maximum of utility with the minimum of cost.'

'Yes,' said Gabrielle.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of some visitors. This was the day when Claudia regularly conversed with the friends who were anxious like her, and by her ministration, to find out the truth in everything and to strip all doctrine bare of excrescence and of illusion. Claudia presented each of her visitors in turn to Gabrielle. She called everyone by her baptismal name except Gabrielle, who was not supposed to be yet converted to the recognition of the fact that any addition to the name is an untruth. To do Claudia's little sisterhood justice, it was unlike most sects in the fact that it cheerfully admitted difference of opinion and variety of practice. Gabrielle had never before seen or heard of any sect which illustrated no principle of exclusiveness or indeed of persecution. 'Is there'—the whimsical question came up in her mind—'only one truly free and liberal sect on earth? and is it represented by a handful of girls and women in a little room at the top of a house in a small London street?' Gabrielle began to grow melancholy.

'My friend Letitia Roberts,' the eager Claudia with her in-

roductions went on. 'Letitia is the celebrated poetess. She is the authoress of "Aleyone, or the Central Sun." It is a metaphysical poem. You have read it, perhaps?'

'I have not read it,' Gabrielle answered—'yet.'

'I will send you a copy of it, if you will allow me,' the poetess said. She was a tall and elderly woman to whom Gabrielle's heart went out in a moment, her black dress looked so rusty. In another country, Gabrielle thought, such a woman would have distinction. She did not stop to put any question to herself as to the geographical situation of the better land which would have crowned the authoress of 'Aleyone.'

'Elizabeth Eagle,' Claudia said, introducing a rather pretty girl, whose youthful face contrasted oddly with the little old-fashioned corkscrew ringlets that adorned it. 'Elizabeth has published a remarkable series of letters on the new political economy. You are familiar with the name of Barbara Severance? She is the editor of the "Religious Dissector," a monthly organ of advanced public opinion, intended to show the central fallacy underlying all creeds hitherto accepted among men. Elizabeth's letters on the new political economy appeared first in the "Dissector." They were then called "A Political Gospel for True Men."'

'When we speak of men, of course we mean women also,' the editor of the 'Religious Dissector' explained. She was a bright-eyed, fat little woman of about five-and-forty, with a beaming expression of kindness; just the sort of woman from whom children instinctively expect bread and jam, with plenty of jam.

'Of course,' Gabrielle said.

'I am glad to hear you say "of course" so cordially,' Barbara Severance remarked. 'Women out in the world don't always fall in with our views.'

'I am not much in the world, but I don't see how anyone could object. Why should anyone object?'

'We don't admit any difference between man and woman,' Barbara explained. 'At least, I don't. I deny that nature intends us to admit any. I see that my friend Sara Crossley shakes her head; she has a different creed. She holds that man is the imperfect or lower or unfinished animal, and is destined to pass away altogether in time. Now, I don't admit that nature makes any imperfections.'

'But then you must allow me to say something on that, Barbara,' another lady interposed, speaking in a sweet, soft monotone. 'I deny altogether the existence of nature. What is nature in your sense?'

'Nature is a gas,' said a sharp little girl with round eyes.

‘Nature, I should say,’ Claudia interposed, ‘is a movement; of course I only speak metaphorically and for the sake of being understood. The movement of the imperfect to resolve itself into the perfect is my interpretation of nature.’

‘Would you not rather call it a tendency, Claudia?’ a slender, fashionably dressed philosopher sweetly asked.

‘Perhaps it would be a clearer way of conveying the idea which you and I have in our minds, Sophia, if we were to call it a tendency,’ Claudia replied. ‘I gladly accept your correction, Sophia.’

‘Not a correction, certainly, Claudia,’ Sophia gently remonstrated. ‘I should not presume to correct Claudia Lemuel. I understand my intellectual position better. But it does seem to me, that in your sense—which, pardon me, Jeannette—to the lady of the monotone, ‘I know is not yours—nature would be a tendency rather than a movement.’

Gabrielle did not find her ideas of the relations of man to his surroundings much cleared up by assuming nature to be a tendency rather than a movement. But it was evident that the compromise appeared to remove a difficulty from the way of some of the fair philosophers in Claudia’s chambers, and she was glad that a point of agreement had been thus found early.

‘We could hardly do better, I think,’ one of the ladies now suggested, ‘than ask Claudia to tell us what thoughts occur to her on the subject of nature as a tendency.’

A little murmur of approval went round the room. The lady who was addressed as Sara Crossley seemed to be somewhat of a disputatious turn, for she asked:

‘On nature as a tendency as opposed to the theory of nature as a force? or nature as a tendency reconciled with nature as a force? It is of great importance to know precisely the point of view from which we are starting.’

Gabrielle thought it would be of the utmost importance for her if she could know precisely the point of view from which they were starting. But she almost began to despair of any such illumination. The lady with the sweet monotone spoke:

‘For myself, I should of course say nature as a tendency in opposition to the doctrine of nature as a force. But I presume Claudia will claim to be allowed to regard the one doctrine as supplementary to the other.’

‘Perhaps Claudia would tell us what her views are,’ Gabrielle suggested, seeing that Claudia seemed only waiting for a chance to deliver her ideas of the truth.



1. Claudia, I found at home!

‘What I would say,’ Claudia began, ‘is this.’ And then, standing close to her deal table with one hand resting on it, she poured forth in conversational tone and with a volubility that knew no pause or even check, a stream of words concerning nature and man. While she was speaking Gabrielle took occasion to glance round the room now and then and study the faces and heads of the little company. There were ten or a dozen women in all, not counting the hostess and her two servants. Small as the company was, it represented womanhood at all typical ages from sixteen to sixty. Some were married; some were decidedly pretty; some were fashionably dressed; very few were fairly of the class from which the caricaturist would select his illustration of the woman reformer. All looked intelligent; all spoke volubly; all seemed absorbed in earnestness; all seemed self-conceited; and yet all—and this surprised Gabrielle most—were patient of opposing opinions and gentle of speech. Every now and then Claudia purposely stopped, and then anyone who had a question to put or an objection to suggest was free to do so, and to be answered by Claudia or anybody else. What they spoke about Gabrielle did not always or often understand. So far as she could get at the general ideas of their discussion, it did not seem to her that it would be of the slightest consequence whether their opinions were all right or were all wrong. The question whether nature is a movement or only a tendency, and whether there is in actual fact anything to be properly described as nature, seemed fairly illustrative of the character of the discussion. ‘What does it matter what nature is?’—the impatient and unphilosophic Gabrielle kept thinking. ‘What does it matter, at all events, what we say it is? We don’t change anything by that, or do anybody any good.’ She found her hopes of receiving some valuable lessons of life from Claudia and her sisterhood fast deserting her. She was especially disappointed at not having heard any explanation of the doctrine of Pessimism, about which she had always been hearing much and learning nothing. Perhaps her face was too expressive wholly to conceal her anxiety to get to something on this subject, for the lady with the low monotone voice suddenly said:

‘I beg pardon, Claudia; I am sure this lady’—gently indicating Gabrielle—‘wishes to ask a question.’

‘I didn’t mean to interrupt,’ Gabrielle said, feeling somewhat embarrassed when so many pairs of earnest feminine eyes were suddenly turned upon her. ‘I was anxious perhaps to hear some explanation of the doctrine of Pessimism.’

‘We have been drawn away from that subject,’ Claudia ex-

plained, 'by the question as to the constitution of nature. We do not generally venture on more than one topic at a sitting.'

Gabrielle felt as if she had been doing wrong, and hastened to apologise. But a chorus of kindly voices assured her that the question was most welcome as showing her philosophic interest in the general subject, and it was at once arranged that the very next time Mrs. Vanthorpe chose to come, the question of Pessimism should be the order of the day, to borrow the expression of continental parliamentary assemblies.

'In the mean time,' said Claudia, 'I may perhaps tell our friend that we all differ among ourselves here as to the true meaning of the doctrine of Pessimism. My own theory may be stated in a few words, reserving all examination of it for a future day.'

'I should like to hear it of all things,' Gabrielle said; 'I should be the better prepared for the next time.'

'My principle,' Claudia began, 'is this.' Her friends listened with as much earnest interest as though the views of Claudia were absolutely new to them. 'All the false philosophy and most of the evils and sufferings of life have come from the theory that the world was constructed for the best. My conviction is that everything on this earth was constructed for the worst——'

'For the——?' Gabrielle asked, not quite certain as to Claudia's latest word.

'For the worst. As a trial of strength for the great rescuing and reorganising force which is to regenerate man. Of course, I am not now stating the doctrine of Schopenhauer.'

'Oh, no; no;' a murmur went round the room, some tones implying that Claudia's statement would, if accepted as an exposition of Schopenhauer, be doing an entire injustice to the principles of that philosopher; others conveying the impression that the murmurers renounced Schopenhauer and all his works and pomps.

'I have nothing to do with Schopenhauer,' Claudia explained. 'I do not read his works any more. I have only given you my own theory as to Pessimism. On that point, as I have said, we all differ. But as to the regenerating and reorganising force by which man's destiny is to be shaped aright on this earth, we have happily among us here no difference of opinion. We are all agreed as to that regenerating force.'

Gabrielle was delighted to hear of the agreement.

'And the regenerating force?' she ventured to ask.

Claudia looked round the room benignly; glanced up to the ceiling; partly closed her eyes; opened them again; and then, in the tone of one who breathes a prayer or speaks out some solemn and sacred oracle, uttered the word 'Woman.'

‘Oh,’ said Gabrielle. She felt a little disappointed. She had tolerably lofty notions of her own concerning the mission of woman; but to set her up as the one regenerating force seemed expecting rather too much of poor woman, who had such a great deal to do otherwise. Gabrielle did not somehow see how she, for example, as one woman, was to set about the work of regeneration, starting now at once from Claudia’s chambers. The mission seemed a little unsatisfactory or undefined to her energetic and impatient spirit. She wanted something to be doing, something to be going on with, meanwhile.

She took leave of Claudia and her friends not without a feeling of admiration and of pity for them. She learned that they met thus Sunday after Sunday and studied the problems of man’s destiny and the way to regenerate man, poor fellow. They discussed theories about nature and the future world, and the mission of humanity; and they were profoundly in earnest about everything, and they sincerely believed they were beginning a new order of things. Each one was a little celebrity, a little poetess or priestess, among her fellows. So far as Gabrielle could see, they appeared to have no jealousies, no spites, no intolerance. So far as she could conjecture, they were absolutely unconcerned as to the praise or blame of man; it was all the same to them whether the creature whom they were pledged to regenerate cared about their plans or was laughing at them. Indeed, the idea that anybody ever made a joke about anything did not seem to enter their heads. The women all appeared to be fond of each other. ‘I never read a satire yet,’ Gabrielle said to herself, ‘in which women were not shown as hating each other. I never heard of a sect or school without jealousies and quarrels. Is this the one exception? And if it is, what a satire in itself! Behold, here is a sect in which there is no hatred, no intolerance; a society in which the women are all fond of each other, and never quarrel; and it is collected together in a little back room up several flights of stairs, and no mortal could make out what its members want to do, or what they are talking about.’

‘I wonder is all philosophy like that, if one only knew?’ she thought. She was driving homewards now. Suddenly looking out of the window of her little carriage she saw a boy carrying a cage, and in the cage was a white mouse going round and round in his little wheel with much noise and tremendous energy of purpose, but making no progress. ‘Or like that?’ she suddenly asked of herself.

CHAPTER XVII.

‘I CLAIM YOU AS THE SISTER OF MY SOUL.’

GABRIELLE soon put aside her doubts as to the virtues of philosophy. Her thoughts turned on the death of Philip Vanthorpe and the promise Fielding had got from her that she would not move to find his widow until she had first heard from him. She was thinking much as to the meaning of all this, and thinking too of the curious chance that had thrown Fielding in her way. When she reached her home, occupied perhaps more than usual with her own thoughts, she did not observe that Miss Elvin was in a very depressed mood. The singer had not only spent her day at home for nothing, but had the dissatisfaction of knowing that Walter Taxal did call, and not finding Gabrielle at home had gone away. Her brother had not come, she told Gabrielle, and she was disappointed; for if she had known he was not coming it would have delighted her to go to Claudia Lemuel's.

Gabrielle's maid here told her that a lady who had called twice to see her, while she was out, had come now again, and was waiting in another room.

‘Such an odd-looking woman; I saw her for a moment,’ Miss Elvin said; ‘she seems a strange sort of person, like a foreigner, and not at all like a lady.’

‘Very likely a foreigner,’ said Gabrielle coldly: ‘but why not a lady too, Gertrude?’

‘Oh, I don't know; I never think foreign women are ladies.’ Since her transplantation from Camberwell the young singer had grown nicely critical of the ways of those who would try to be ladies.

Gabrielle went to see her visitor, who was waiting for her in the room where we first met Miss Elvin herself; the room where Gabrielle had received Fielding, and which had the portrait of Albert Vanthorpe resting on the chimney-piece. Gabrielle was in the habit of receiving visits from all sorts of women coming with all manner of appeals and proposals. It was one of her principles never to refuse to see anyone who wished to see her on Sunday or other day, unless some engagement made it absolutely impossible to receive the visitor. It is marvellous how soon it gets known in London that there is someone, man or woman, in any street or quarter, with a benevolent turn and a little money. Gabrielle might have been the Countess of Monte Christo, so beset was she with letters and visits from persons who desired her assistance for some private need, or for some grand project designed to benefit

the whole human race. At times she was almost inclined to believe that such persons must have a way of making a mark on the outer wall or the little gate of her tiny demesne, as professional beggars are said to do, whereby others in the same profession were admonished that piteous appeals would have a good chance there. Her fortune was but a modest property at the best; and she might have bestowed it all away in any one week if she had entertained all the proposals made by enthusiasts of her own sex within that space of time. Therefore she was now getting used to all sorts of visitors, even to those whose humours were emphasised by a strong dash of insanity. Yet there was something about the aspect of this particular visitor which filled her with a strange sense of repugnance and almost of alarm. The woman was showily dressed, was tall and handsome. Her draperies trailed all over the hearth; her chains and bracelets and bangles rattled and clanked; there was something tempestuous about her motions that seemed uncomfortable and overwhelming to ordinary nerves. But beyond all this the moment Gabrielle saw the woman the thought flashed upon her, 'Now I am going to hear something unpleasant.'

The tall woman threw back her veil and showed a decidedly handsome face, where the remains of youth still struggled against the too conspicuous efforts of art to repair them. What indeed can be witness of decay so conclusive as restoration?

'I am speaking to Gabrielle Vanthorpe,' the visitor said, in tones that might have expressed long pent-up affection for Gabrielle Vanthorpe, or a passionate hope that Gabrielle Vanthorpe was to give her sanctuary from some danger which had chased her up to that very door.

'My name is Gabrielle Vanthorpe.'

'You were the wife of Albert Vanthorpe?'

'I was.'

'Do you remember Philip Vanthorpe, his elder brother, who went away?'

Gabrielle began to have a sickening presentiment of the revelation that was coming. She instinctively fought it off as long as she could, and only answered:

'I don't remember him; I don't think I ever saw him: he was several years older than my husband; he went away before I used to be much at his mother's house.'

'Do you know that he is dead?'

'I have heard so lately.'

'Do you know who I am?'

Gabrielle perhaps could have guessed now, but she did not guess; her visitor gave her no time.

‘We are sisters—as good as sisters, anyhow. I am Paulina Vanthorpe ; I am the widow of your husband’s brother. Won’t you kiss me, Gabrielle ?’ And she swooped on Gabrielle with rush of silks and rattle of bracelets.

Gabrielle kissed her, closing her eyes as she did so, for the sight of the unmistakable paint became too much for nearer endurance. Nor was the sight all ; the fervent embrace to which Gabrielle was subjected left a distinct taste of the paint behind it.

‘Oh, I shall love you, Gabrielle !’ the enthusiastic stranger exclaimed. ‘I feel quite like loving you already, Gabrielle ! Lord, what a sweet pretty name ! My name too—Paulina—ain’t it a pretty name ? I mean, isn’t it a pretty name, Gabrielle ? Oh, we must love each other ; and we shall, I know we shall be real sisters, I know already. Won’t you call me Paulina ?’

‘Will you sit down—Paulina ?’ Gabrielle said, not without some little difficulty in bringing herself to the name. When Fielding saw Paulina in the Surrey house his first thought was of how Gabrielle Vanthorpe could endure such a sister-in-law. Now Gabrielle’s first thought was for Mrs. Leven—how could she endure such a daughter-in-law ?

‘Yes, I’ll sit down ; thank you, you’re very kind, I’m sure,’ said Paulina.

‘This is strange news to me,’ Gabrielle began to explain, feeling that her lack of enthusiasm perhaps might have called for some explanation. ‘I was not quite prepared for it ; it comes on me by surprise ; I did not even know until very lately that my husband’s brother was married.’

‘Oh, bless you, yes ; very much married indeed. He wasn’t at all the sort of person to remain long unmarried ; why, I think they were all a marrying family the Vanthorpes. Phil often told me his mother married when she was only seventeen, was only eighteen when he was born, I believe. Your Vanthorpe must have been precious young when he married you ; I don’t wonder at his impatience, I’m sure. I was only eighteen when poor Phil talked me into marrying him—oh, quite a chit of a thing ; didn’t know what I was doing one bit. He talked me into it, said his mother would love me when she came to know me. I wonder if she will ? He didn’t seem to be so sure of it afterwards. I never saw the old lady, of course.’

‘Mrs. Leven is not an old lady,’ Gabrielle said. The buoyant Paulina’s way of talking about all the family was something quite new to Gabrielle.

‘Bless your heart, I know. That’s only my way of talking. I know all about her age. My Phil was only twenty-eight when he

died, or twenty-nine perhaps; I don't quite remember at the moment, but I could soon tell if I thought it over. You don't doubt my story, I hope?' she said, suddenly turning her large eyes on Gabrielle, whose hesitation was beginning to impress her.

'No,' Gabrielle said, 'I cannot doubt your story—and I suppose you could bring me proof enough if I did doubt it.'

'Proof? Look here. There's Phil Vanthorpe's likeness—see if it isn't the own brother of that picture standing over the fireplace there. Look at what's written under the little likeness: "from Philip Vanthorpe to his beloved wife."'

Paulina, after much fumbling about her exuberant person, had produced a photograph in a handsome case which she handed to Gabrielle; 'done in New Orleans—Canal Street, New Orleans—at one of the best photographers in the city,' she added. There could be no doubt that the photographed face bore a strong resemblance to that of Albert Vanthorpe and of Mrs. Leven too. There could be no doubt that the words 'from Philip Vanthorpe to his beloved wife' were written on the lower margin of the photograph in a small hand, which seemed to Gabrielle to resemble in character that of Albert Vanthorpe.

'And if you have any doubts on the matter you can ask Mr. Fielding. You know Mr. Fielding?' Paulina fixed a very keen and scrutinising gaze on Gabrielle.

'Yes, I know Mr. Fielding.'

'Very well; he knew all about us. My husband and he were like brothers. Why, he and I were more like brother and sister than anything you can imagine; it was always Paulina here and Paulina there. You can ask him all about me; he'll tell you if I am Mrs. Vanthorpe or not. Oh, it's all right enough, I'm Mrs. Vanthorpe as sure as you are Mrs. Albert.'

Indeed Gabrielle had no doubt of the truth of the woman's story: she felt in her own heart that it was only too true. Now she could understand Fielding's hesitation and the promise he had exacted from her.

'I have lots of poor Phil's letters and things, you know, over at the place where I am lodging,' Paulina said. 'I only want to satisfy you, Gabrielle; the sooner it's done the better for me, for I want to feel as if we were sisters. I feel like a sister to you already, but I don't think you feel so to me; and I think that's unkind of you, Gabrielle.'

A tear or two began to shine in the eyes of the misprized Paulina; the tears however would not be allowed to descend upon her cheeks, because the cheeks were made up for the visit, and *must not be furrowed*.

Gabrielle began to feel touched and to be conscience-smitten. She remembered how she had told Fielding that she did not care whether Philip Vanthorpe's wife was a woman of education or not, and now she was already acting in disregard of her own principles, or at least she was thinking in disregard of them. 'How can this poor creature help it,' she asked of herself, 'if she has not been well brought up? She seems to have a warm heart, and my husband's brother loved her. Am I going to close my heart against her when she has no one else?' For it occurred to her, even in that moment of some confusion, that Mrs. Leven would never consent to take such a daughter-in-law to her arms.

'Don't think me unkind—Paulina; pray don't. I am only a little confused—you can understand this is so new to me. If you are the widow of my husband's brother—yes, I am sure you are, I don't mean to throw any doubt on that—you must be like a sister to me. You will tell me what you want done that I can do, and you will stay with me for the present. You know that unfortunately the mother of both our husbands, Mrs. Leven, has set her heart against me, and that I never see her—and she so loved me once.' Gabrielle's own grievance began to moisten her eyes.

'Yes, I have heard something of that. It's bad for you and for me, I suppose. I have much more of a claim on her than I have on you,' the candid Paulina observed. 'You can't take me to see her, then? I should like to go with you ever so much: you could say things for me better than I could say them for myself.'

'No, Paulina, I can't take you to her; I don't know what I can do; but you will let me think it over, won't you? I am sure some good inspiration will guide us in the end to do the right thing.'

'Just so,' said Paulina, nodding complacently; 'when we put our heads together we'll get at the right end of things.'

'And you will stay with me for the present? This house must be your home until you find one that has a better claim on you; and you must tell me all your story. Remember, I know almost nothing of my husband's brother; he never allowed his mother to know anything about him.'

'That was because of me, I dare say. I wasn't a grand person, Gabrielle, as you can easily see; I had no merit but that I loved the poor boy, and I suppose he didn't like his mother to have a chance of showing that she looked down upon his wife. That was his way, you know: he had plenty of spirit, poor Phil.'

Whether it was art or nature that dictated to Paulina this way of putting her case, the appeal went straight home to the heart of Gabrielle. The thought of the woman who had loved and cared

for Philip Vanthorpe, and who had been loved by him, being now cast off and despised by any member of Philip Vanthorpe's family, while he who would have protected her was lying in his far grave, was more than Gabrielle's spirit could endure. She felt in a mood to do battle for Paulina against a whole armed and bristling world of conventionalities and respectabilities; in a temper to wish that she, and she alone, had the battle to fight. She kissed Paulina again spontaneously, paint and all, without wincing. She did not heed now the look or the taste of the paint. 'What is paint itself but a question of conventionality? Every woman wore it at one time,' Gabrielle thought. 'One's heart isn't painted.'

'Your husband was right, Paulina,' Gabrielle said earnestly. 'He was right in not allowing you to humble yourself even for his mother. But I wish he had written to his brother—or to me. I wouldn't have shown any such feeling—well, it is too late to talk of all that now. We must be sisters, Paulina; we are sisters in our widowhood already. You will tell me all about your life——'

'I will tell you everything,' Paulina said fervently, and highly amused within herself at the idea of her making such a revelation.

'You will stay here to-night?'

'Oh, I shall be ever so happy!'

'But your child?' Gabrielle said, bethinking her. 'You have a child? Where is he?'

'Oh, the child! Dear creature, bless his heart, he is well taken care of. He won't mind for once.'

'He will miss his mother, won't he? Can't we send for him? It will be no trouble.'

'Thank you, no, it isn't worth while. He is ever so well off. He is almost fonder of his nurse than of me. He would miss her more than me; we'll see about him to-morrow.'

Gabrielle was a little surprised, but said nothing more, and it was settled that Paulina should abide that night with Gabrielle as a mere preliminary of sisterhood and in order that Paulina might confide to her the whole of her story; and next day they were to take more deliberate counsel as to what should further be done. Gabrielle felt sadly in lack of some one to advise her. She assumed that Paulina must be poor. Paulina herself had implied all that. It seemed a monstrous thing that Philip Vanthorpe's wife and child should be in any manner of distress while Philip Vanthorpe's mother was rich; and yet Gabrielle, with all her romance and chivalry, could not picture to herself Mrs. Leven doing anything for a woman like Paulina except on condition of Paulina's removing herself far out of Mrs. Leven's range.

Gabrielle's heart was filled with premature anger at the thought of such a compromise being offered to poor Paulina.

The presence of Paulina was not made less perplexing by the fact that Miss Elvin was staying with Gabrielle. It was necessary to tell the young singer that the odd-looking person whose appearance had amused her so much was the widow of Gabrielle's husband's brother, just come from the Southern States of America to seek the family whom she had never seen before. Miss Elvin received Paulina with hardly disguised wonder and scorn, and at once set her down as the very type and model of the Yankee woman; Yankee being in Miss Elvin's vocabulary every American from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico; Paulina carrying low London in every movement and accent so plainly that the sense ached at it. Paulina made elaborate excuses for not appearing at dinner in proper dinner-dress, explaining with needless iteration how she had not come with the least idea of staying, but only to see what Gabrielle was like and whether they could get on together, and how she was that independent that if she hadn't liked Gabrielle and thought Gabrielle liked her, she wouldn't have remained a moment in the house.

'But I do like her. I took to her from the first; I saw she was just my style from the moment I looked into her eyes,' the effusive Paulina went on. 'Real jam, I call her. This young lady don't understand what real jam is, I see. Nor you neither, Gabrielle, I dare say?' She laughed at the notion of their ignorance.

'I don't know what it means,' Gabrielle said in a disheartened tone, as of one who had no profound anxiety to learn.

'Pray do explain,' Miss Elvin urged. She had already convinced herself that Gabrielle was dying with shame because of this dreadful sister-in-law, and she was anxious to draw Paulina out as much as possible in order that Gabrielle's pride might have the fall which she considered providentially due to her. 'It is some American expression, I suppose? Is it Mark Twain?'

'Well, now, that is funny!' Paulina explained. 'That I should come all this way to teach London slang to you two London ladies! Why, that's a London saying, real jam is. It's the music-halls, I think; and you a singer too, and you didn't know that!'

'I don't sing at the music-halls,' Miss Elvin said in a tone of infinite scorn.

'No? They get a good screw at the music-halls, I'm told. Some first-class artists came out of the music-halls too. But I'm not American, you know, I'm English to the backbone; I'm a regular cockney, born within sound of Bow Bells. My poor Phil had a notion—one of his odd ideas—that nobody ever was born in

London; and it is curious, if you ask people, how you find almost everyone you ask was born in the provinces. But I always told him his notion wouldn't wash; for I was born within the sound of Bow Bells themselves.'

Paulina's apologies for her lack of proper dinner-dress were not only superfluous, but had the inconvenient effect of drawing attention to the fact that her get-up, such as it was, displayed a good deal of gorgeousness, and contrasted with the pre-Raphaelite dead colouring and scant ornament of Miss Elvin's attire, and the extreme simplicity of Gabrielle's dress. Further, Paulina had contrived to extemporise a sort of imitation of dinner-toilette, according to her idea of its requirements, by turning in a considerable portion of the neck and front of her dress, and so managing to make a very respectable display of bust crossed and recrossed with massy chains of gold. Paulina drank a great deal of wine at dinner; and for Gabrielle and Miss Elvin wine was rather an ornamental accessory of the dinner-table than a part of the meal. She also asked for soda-water, and for a little brandy to compound with it. She had a very vigorous, healthy appetite; and her capacity for the consumption of sweets proved to be something remarkable. When Gabrielle's maid was a little slow about the opening of the soda-water, Paulina good-naturedly said, 'Hand it over, my dear; I fancy I can do that better than you can,' and made her boast good by proving that she could do it a great deal better.

'I can open a bottle of soda or a bottle of fizz,' Paulina said with well-founded pride, 'and never as much as wink.'

It was a trying evening for all three. But it would surely have surprised Gabrielle if she could have known that it was most of all trying to Paulina, who ate and drank with such an appearance of content and relish. Paulina had a hard struggle many a time to keep down her temper, and not to have what she would have called a flare-out. She saw in a moment that the little sallow girl, as she called Miss Elvin, was giving herself airs and looking down on her. And she thought, with a fierce longing for the chance, how short a time it would take her to take the conceit out of the girl. Then even Gabrielle's sweet and kindly ways sometimes aroused in her a spirit of antagonism. 'Why is she any better than me, I want to know?' she mentally asked herself. 'I haven't had any bringing up; if I had, I dare say I should be just as good and just as much of a lady as her.' But Paulina was for the present playing a part; and she was determined to play it out. As she boasted to Fielding, she was quite clever enough to take on *any part that might best commend her to the people she sought*

to please; and she thought she had hit upon the best way to 'fetch' Gabrielle, as she would herself have put it. She knew that the one part she could not sustain was that of a lady. The moment she spoke to Gabrielle she saw that it would be of no use attempting any imitation of the part with her. She had thought for a moment of doing the high tragedy; but she fancied she saw something in Gabrielle's manner that would have made that attempt unpromising. In another moment or two her genuine natural cleverness enabled her to get at the reality of Gabrielle's character. She saw its simplicity, its generosity, its chivalry, if we may apply such a word to a woman's nature, its Quixotry. 'At the age of two,' she said to herself, 'I wasn't as innocent as that. Lord, how could I be?' She made up her mind at once. The part of a kind-hearted, unaffected, untaught woman was the thing for Gabrielle, she felt certain. Not goody-goody, but honest and good-natured. A frank confession of humble bringing-up and lack of education, and an appeal to the generosity of Gabrielle not to be ashamed of her because she hadn't had a good bringing-up—that, she thought, was the card to play. She played it accordingly; and she saw that things were going on very well. But there were moments when the performance came a little hard upon her. She remembered a night when she flung a woman on the floor in New Orleans and trampled on her. If Miss Gertrude Elvin could have known how often this pleasant recollection was passing through the mind of her companion at Gabrielle's table, and how the past triumph was re-enacted in imagination with her for its victim, she would have found the little banquet far less agreeable even than it actually was.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAULINA STOOPS TO CONQUER.

THE day after the arrival of the unexpected guest at Gabrielle's, Fielding—perhaps we may still describe him simply as we have always hitherto known him—was on his way to pay a visit to Paulina's hostess. One result of Gabrielle's good offices between the brothers naturally was to place Fielding in the position of a recognised friend. The new phase of Fielding's existence was very delightful to him. He would in any case probably have enjoyed the novelty of it as he did most novelties; and would have liked the West-end London life if only as a change after the Southern States and Bolingbroke Place. But he had now one or two particular reasons for liking the change.

He was greatly touched by his brother's way of receiving *him*, and of renewing their affection, or rather making way for an

affection which before had had no chance of existence. Nothing could have been less like what Fielding might have expected than the ways of his brother towards him. If Wilberforce had discovered some entirely new and incomparable way of lighting his house, he could not have been more pleased than he was with the novelty of having a brother. He was never done talking to all the people he knew about 'my brother, don't you know?—my brother Clarkson; just come back from somewhere; splendid fellow: you positively must know him.' He took Clarkson all over his town house from garret to basement, to show him all the recent improvements. He proposed to take him down to his country place presently, where there were still greater wonders to be exhibited, for the genius of practical science had to do there with gardens, grounds, and game, horses and stables, dogs and kennels, as well as with fireplaces and windows. Meantime, he hurried him down to Sydenham to show him a little place he had there quite near the Crystal Palace, and where he was trying plans for the acclimatisation of various foreign shrubs and flowers. He was always telling Clarkson they must have a long talk over old times together; but the long talk never seemed likely to come off, for whenever they were alone Wilberforce had always some new device in the way of industrial science on which to consult his brother. He persisted in the assumption that a man who had been in so many foreign countries as Clarkson must be an authority on all subjects connected with the building, furnishing, lighting, and ventilating of houses.

Fielding fell into all this in his usual companionable way. He declared that he was getting already softened and spoiled by civilisation; and he persisted in retaining his old lodging in Bolingbroke Place, and in going there to pass a night when he felt inclined; but for the present at least he was in a manner taken captive by his brother's kindness and good-fellowship, and he liked the new life remarkably well. He was always saying to himself that such a life would never suit him, that he was made for a gipsy or a tramp; and he was always making up his mind that he must go somewhere and do something to-morrow. But meantime he was like that son of Cato the younger, of whom the epigram set forth that he had passed we know not how many days in going to-morrow.

One other novelty in which Sir Wilberforce took a manifest and undisguised delight was the society of Gabrielle. He made up his mind to go to Lady Honeybell's whenever there was a chance of her being there; and he called to see her sometimes at her own house, and talked a great deal with her whenever he had

the opportunity. Fielding was generally with him on these occasions, and therefore grew to be quite an established friend of Gabrielle's. It sometimes seemed to her as if she surely must have known him for years instead of a few weeks.

This particular day, however, Fielding set out to call on Gabrielle without his brother. He was anxious to speak to her about the Vanthorpe affair. He had heard or come at the knowledge of something which made him suspicious more than ever of Paulina's movements and purposes, and he thought it would be of great importance to put Gabrielle on her guard. He little suspected that at the very time when he was making his way to Gabrielle's with this object, his name was on the lips of her and of the woman from whom he would if possible have kept her wide as the poles apart.

If Gabrielle Vanthorpe had been dealing in unholy arts, and had conjured up, to scare her friends, some abhorrent phantom she could not now exorcise and banish, she could hardly have felt more painfully responsible and self-reproachful. She thought with sickening misgivings of the part she had taken, slight as it was, in bringing up the spectre of Paulina to vex the future life of Mrs. Leven. Why did she meddle or make in the matter? she kept asking herself. True, it was at no call of hers, and by no quest of hers, that the extraordinary Paulina presented herself. But Gabrielle had long been wishing to find some trace of Philip Vanthorpe, and had thought, not surely in any ignoble way, to find her own account in it by commending herself to his mother; and now she seemed like some unlucky creature who, by a single unhallowed wish, has summoned an unwelcome apparition that will never cease to haunt. Every hour she spent in Paulina's company more and more convinced her that it would be absolutely impossible to induce Mrs. Leven to endure such a daughter-in-law. If she could only believe Paulina to be an impostor—but there was no use in thinking of such a thing. Paulina had referred to Fielding as a witness to the truth of her story. Indeed, it would be impossible to doubt it. She had told Gabrielle a hundred things about Philip Vanthorpe's younger days and his quarrels with his mother, of which Gabrielle remembered to have heard in a vague half-hushed sort of way before, and which certainly Paulina could only have heard from Vanthorpe himself.

There was something uncomfortable, uncanny about the woman which made her companionship more oppressive to Gabrielle than any mere lack of education or good manners could have done. There was something sinister about her when the surface of good-heartedness was ruffled for a moment by any hint of contradiction.

Gabrielle had seen her eyebrows contract and a light flash from her eyes once or twice as she looked at Miss Elvin, which had alarming suggestions about it as of the cage of a wild animal or a maniac's cell. Then, where was the child? It was now well on in the afternoon of the day after her arrival, and Paulina did not appear particularly anxious about the child. The whole world seemed to have grown perplexed for Gabrielle since this ill-omened visitor came inside her threshold. Yet to her Paulina was only exuberant good-nature and gratitude.

'I must do something, I must send for some one—take some one's advice,' the troubled Gabrielle thought. 'Major Leven?—Mr. Fielding, surely, would be better.'

'Had I not better write a line to Mr. Fielding, and ask him to come and see you, Paulina?' Gabrielle asked. They two were alone. 'He will wish to see you, and you will like to see him.'

'Law, Gabrielle, send for him as soon as you like, if it's any ease to your mind, my dear; if you don't feel quite sure about yours truly, Fielding will soon give you satisfaction on that point. He can't deny that I am myself, anyhow; he can't say that this girl isn't the wife of Philip Vanthorpe. But don't send for him on my account, I beg of you, nor on his, my dear. We don't particularly want to see each other, I can tell you.'

'But he was such a friend of your husband——?'

'Just so; but the friend of the husband isn't always the friend of the wife, dear; especially if the wife should happen to be too fond of the husband. Anyhow, Master Fielding don't like me now; I dare say he won't have a good word for me; but send for him as soon as ever you like, Gabrielle; I see it would be something of a satisfaction to you, and I don't blame you. Why should you take my word? although I know I could take your word for anything, once I looked into your eyes. Send for Fielding, dear, right away. It don't matter to me at all. We are not very good friends; but we shan't come to words in your presence, I dare say.'

Gabrielle found this sort of talk unendurable.

'Perhaps if I were to consult Major Leven——'

'That's the husband of the old lady?'

'Please, Paulina, don't call Mrs. Leven the old lady. I don't like it; she is not old.'

'That's only my way, Gabrielle dear. You'll not mind me when you have known me a longer time.'

Gabrielle's heart sank at the suggestion.

'Mrs. Leven is a lady many people find it difficult to deal with,' Gabrielle explained. 'She is a noble woman at heart, but *she has strong predilections*—strong likings and dislikings, I mean.'

‘I’ll bring her to reason, depend upon it. Ain’t I her eldest son’s wife?’

‘Yes, but then you must remember, Paulina, that her son left her very early, and she may not admit any claim on her; and she is married again—and I think we had better make our appeal to her feelings and her heart.’

‘You leave it to me, my dear: I’ll bring her to reason soon enough,’ the complacent Paulina said. ‘The sooner she falls in with my views and the quieter she keeps me, the less talk and exposure there will be, don’t you see? Folks like her don’t like family affairs talked of.’

‘I don’t think that would have much effect on Mrs. Leven, Paulina; it would not have any on me,’ Gabrielle said firmly.

Paulina was afraid she had been going too far.

‘Oh, for that matter,’ she said softly, ‘I am well aware I haven’t any sort of claim on you, Gabrielle, only what your kind heart and your nature give. You are very good to take me on my own word even. You have been only too good already. The moment you say “go,” I’ll go, Gabrielle; and I shall still owe you good will for some happy, happy hours of shelter and kindness.’

At this moment it was announced to Gabrielle that Mr. Fielding had called. She hailed his coming with delight.

‘Here is Mr. Fielding, Paulina; we will see him at once. I am so glad!’

‘Now for a nice piece of acting,’ thought Paulina.

Gabrielle went forward to welcome Fielding with special cordiality. The room was somewhat darkened, for the summer was growing on, and Paulina, for all her Southern experiences, declared that she could not bear the sun. Fielding did not at once see who was with Gabrielle, although her manner made him sure that she had something out of the common to say to him.

‘You have come at the very time when we wanted you, Mr. Fielding,’ the almost breathless Gabrielle said. ‘You see I have an old friend of yours with me. You have not forgotten this lady?’

‘If you have forgotten me I shall take it unkind of you, Fielding,’ the lady said for herself, half rising from her chair in a languid way. And Fielding saw that the woman whom it was his special effort to keep from touching Gabrielle with even the slightest contact was under her roof and seated in closest companionship with her. His mind went back in a moment to some of the scenes of Philip Vanthorpe’s later life; to the fierce quarrels he himself had witnessed; to what he had seen with his own eyes of Paulina’s savage temper, animal love of food and drink, revolting coquetry, and almost brutal vulgarity; and as he now saw her by Gabrielle’s

side, his first wild feeling was regret that she was not a man whom he could thrust by force from that sweet and gracious home.

He did not even speak to Gabrielle at first.

‘How did you come here?’ he asked sternly of the unabashed Paulina.

‘I came to see my sister-in-law, Mrs. Albert Vanthorpe—why shouldn’t I come to see her? She is not ashamed of me because I wasn’t well brought up and wasn’t born a lady. And why? Because she’s a lady herself.’

‘How on earth did you find her out?’ he asked, turning to Gabrielle. ‘I thought you gave me your promise——’

‘I have not broken any promise,’ Gabrielle said, rather coldly. His manner was a little too sharp, she thought. It was hardly the manner he ought to assume to any woman. ‘My sister-in-law is here of her own wish. She came to see me; and I have welcomed her.’

‘Who told you her name?’ he now addressed himself once more to Paulina. ‘How did you get to know it?’

‘I don’t suppose my whereabouts was very hard to find out, Mr. Fielding,’ Gabrielle said, still cold in her manner towards him. ‘There is a London directory; and the name of Vanthorpe is not quite so common as that of Smith.’

‘But she never knew your name.’

‘My name is her name, Mr. Fielding.’

‘Yes, yes, it is now; of course it is her name by right—but she never knew it. She never heard the name of Vanthorpe; she was always called Clarkson; it was a whim of poor Philip’s to suppress his own name—a whim at first, but after his marriage a very serious purpose. When I saw her the other day I told her that no one but myself knew anything about the whole story, and that I would not tell her your name unless on conditions—that she knows.’

‘That’s all true enough, Gabrielle,’ Paulina said meekly. ‘My poor husband did go by the name of Clarkson out in the States; but I don’t see what’s the odds of that now. I am Philip Vanthorpe’s wife, Mr. Fielding, his lawful wife; you won’t deny that?’

‘You are his wife; that’s only too true.’

‘Well,’ said Gabrielle, interposing, ‘I think that is all I want to know, Mr. Fielding. She is the lawful wife of my husband’s brother: she loved him, and he loved her, and he is dead; and she comes to me. Let others do as they like, I’ll not refuse to own her, and she shall always be welcome here.’

Paulina seized Gabrielle’s hand and covered it with kisses, and then pressed it to her breast. Fielding made a movement as if he would pluck the hand away. But he stopped.

‘Stuff! play-acting!’ were his genial words.

‘I told you, Gabrielle,’ Paulina said; ‘I said Mr. Fielding didn’t like me. I told you he would not have a good word for me; he was always trying to make my husband distrust me. He knows why he don’t like me, and I know it too; but let that pass.’

Fielding was about to break in angrily upon her. But he checked himself. He was not going to wrangle with such a woman in that presence; or to condescend to vindicate his motives or his conduct by a word.

‘Let that pass,’ Paulina hurried on, seeing with joy that she was gaining something of an advantage. ‘I can be generous if he can’t. The only thing I told you that he couldn’t do, Gabrielle, was that he couldn’t deny that I was Philip Vanthorpe’s wife, and that Phil Vanthorpe loved me. You see he don’t deny it, and you see he would deny it if he could.’

‘Yes,’ said Fielding, who saw that remonstrance was now useless, ‘I would deny it if I could; I only wish I could.’

‘You see!’ Paulina exclaimed triumphantly.

‘Now, Mr. Fielding,’ Gabrielle said, returning to composure not without an effort, ‘you see our minds are made up here, and I am sure you have too much sense to think of arguing with women when they tell you they have made up their minds. I hoped my sister-in-law would have found a warmer friend in you; but I am glad that at least you don’t refuse to help her to establish her identity. I want your advice about her. I am sure you will give me good advice.’

‘Yes; I will give you good advice; but will you take it when it is given?’

‘I should like first to know what it is; I don’t intend to commit myself, Mr. Fielding.’

‘My advice is this—about your brother’s wife I have only one advice to offer——’

‘Shall I leave the room, Gabrielle?’ Paulina asked. ‘I don’t mind at all. You can talk about me more freely, perhaps, when I’m not in the way.’

‘No, no; you must stay,’ Gabrielle said.

‘I had rather you heard what I have to say,’ Fielding added. ‘My advice is this—don’t have this woman staying in your house. Buy her off, if you will—I don’t advise it, but if you like buy her off, or get Mrs. Leven to buy her off; but don’t keep her under your roof. She is not a woman to be a companion of yours; *I am not talking now about what she calls her character. If she were as good as the goddess Diana in that sort of way, she is not a companion for you;* and I tell you some harm will come of having

her near you. Do anything you will in the way of kindness or charity; but don't allow her to remain in your house.'

'What has he to say against me?' Paulina asked still in her meek fashion. 'Let him say anything he will, Gabrielle; I don't mind; I'm not afraid. Ask him what he has to say against me: it's only fair he should speak out.'

'Yes, that seems only fair, Mr. Fielding,' Gabrielle said. 'I believe men always hold to some principle of not insinuating a charge without giving one a chance of defending himself; is there not some such principle among you? Why should I not be a friend to one who is so nearly connected with me, and who wants my friendship? Would you act so in such a case?'

'I hope I should listen to the sincere advice of one who knew more than I could know——'

'No, Mr. Fielding; you would do nothing of the kind. I don't believe you would; I am sure you would not. You would never turn your back on anyone whom you ought to care for merely because of some vague hints and objections. You would not do it; neither will I.'

'I suppose it is useless,' Fielding said warmly, 'to expect a woman to listen to reason.'

'See the way you treat us!' Gabrielle said, speaking quickly and with an emotion that now and then seemed likely to stop her speaking altogether. 'We are never done hearing that women have no principles of honour, and fair-play, and all the rest of it; that they listen to stories told behind people's backs, and hit people when they are down; and that only men are open and fair, and meet things face to face, and I don't know what else! And when we try to act on your principles of manly fair dealing, see what comes of it! Then you tell us that we never can be reasonable, because we don't simply do as we are told, and cast off anyone who has a claim on us without asking why or wherefore; because some man chooses to say she is not worthy of your help, but I won't tell you why! You can't have all of us this way, Mr. Fielding; you must take some of us one way or the other. I choose to act on your own principles; and I will stand by a friend like a man.'

Gabrielle looked exceedingly unlike a man at this moment. Her eyes were sparkling with tears, and her voice was all tremulous; and she looked strikingly handsome and intensely feminine. She took Paulina's hand the while and turned towards Fielding with a look of something like defiance.

'I should like you to stand by your friend,' he said, 'if that was all; I am not a man to turn my back on a friend or advise anyone else to do such a thing. But is she your friend? You

see her for the first time ; you know nothing of her—I do ! She broke poor Philip Vanthorpe's heart.'

'It's not true,' Paulina protested in tones of injured and melancholy innocence. 'He died in my arms. If he were alive you wouldn't talk in this way. But I don't want to make any quarrels, Gabrielle, between you and your respectable friends. I ain't a respectable person, I know, in that sense ; I am only a poor woman whom Philip Vanthorpe loved and made his wife.'

'Stuff !' interjected the ungracious Fielding.

'I'll go away, Gabrielle ; I'll go away. God bless you always, anyhow ; for you believed me and were kind to me.'

'You shall not go,' Gabrielle said ; 'you shall stay with me ; you are my sister-in-law, and you shall have a home here as long as you want one.'

'Look here,' Fielding said, turning suddenly on the now flushed Paulina, 'what will you take to go away ? what is your sum ? It will come to that in time—why not give us the figure at once ?'

'You don't understand me, Mr. Fielding,' Paulina replied in a tone of noble scorn. 'You never did. You mistook me in more ways than one. What is my price to go away ? I'll tell you. One word from the lady of this house. Let this lady say the word "go," and I'm gone. Now you have your answer. These are my terms.'

'I say stay,' Gabrielle declared ; 'I say you shall not go. And now surely we need not say any more about all this ? I am sorry if you are offended, Mr. Fielding, or if I seemed angry. I am sure you meant well and kindly ; but you don't understand women.'

'That he don't,' interjected Paulina.

'We have some principles of fair-play, and we have our code of chivalry. I heard you talk once of somebody with whom it would not be safe to go tiger-hunting. He would back out, I suppose, in the moment of danger, and leave his friend in the lurch. Well, I think there are women you might go tiger-hunting with ; I am one.'

Fielding remembered the illustration to which she was referring in her emotional way. It was, indeed, rather a favourite illustration of his own. It was meant to picture the kind of man who, good and worthy enough in other ways, could not be trusted to stay by his friend to the last out of pure companionship and loyalty. It touched him now to hear her cite his own words even in objection to himself.

'One thing will you do ?' he asked. 'Will you put her a plain question—where is Philip Vanthorpe's child ?'

'I do not mean to ask her any question now,' Gabrielle replied,

‘She will tell me all that I want to know, I am sure, time enough. I think she has had questioning enough for one day.’

Gabrielle was now very angry. She could not understand how Fielding could act what seemed to her so unfair a part. She could not understand how he could expect her to sanction it or join in it. She felt hurt to think that he could have known so little of her. A man must despise women in his heart, she thought, who could expect them to act like that. If any drop of poison from Paulina’s half-spoken hints about the cause of his recent dislike to herself mingled in any way with Gabrielle’s feelings then, Gabrielle was not herself conscious of its influence. She was grieved and angered that Fielding should have misunderstood her, and expected her to play an ungenerous part towards the unfortunate Paulina. It came on her mind with a flush of pride in the recollection that it was only the other day she had heard insinuations or charges against himself and had refused to believe them.

‘Well,’ Fielding said, ‘I suppose there is no use in our talking of this any more, Mrs. Vanthorpe? You asked me for my advice and I gave it to you honestly. You won’t take it, and there’s an end.’

‘I know what you would think of me,’ she answered, ‘if I were to take such advice in any other affair. We should hear something about the high principles of women then!’

He presently left her. Each was angry with the other. Paulina was doubly, trebly delighted. She had made her game, as she would have put it, to her own entire satisfaction. If she might have ventured on such a performance, it would have greatly delighted her to execute a wild dance of triumph in the very face of the discomfited Fielding. As it was, she could not refrain from flinging at him one saucy look of exultation as he passed out of the room. He saw it, and she meant that he should see it. She would have lost half the joy of her cleverly won success if she could not have thus taken Fielding into her confidence and let him know distinctly that she had been only playing a part and that she considered herself to have won, and therefore was free to mock at his confusion.

That night Robert Charlton and his wife were sitting in their room in Bolingbroke Place rather late. Robert was seized with a fit of hard work, and was toiling away assiduously, and in silence, his head down. Janet was engaged in some sewing. She was very much depressed and out of spirits. She had not seen anything of Mrs. Vanthorpe for many days. Mrs. Bramble, her aunt, had come to see Janet once or twice, and had brought her some

scraps of gossip, but they were not, somehow, of a nature to gladden Janet.

Suddenly a knock was heard at the door. Charlton started from his work and stood up like a man who fancies he sees a ghost. His wife started merely on seeing him start.

‘Was that a knock, Janet?’

‘I think so, dear. It’s late; I wonder who it can be.’

‘Don’t you go,’ he said, motioning her back. ‘Don’t you go.’

He was moving towards the door. The knock was heard once more, and there was a certain impatience in it.

‘Do you think it is some woman?’ Robert asked.

Why he did not open the door at once or let her open it, his wife could not guess. A voice was heard outside.

‘I do declare it’s Mr. Fielding!’ Janet exclaimed. Her husband drew back.

‘Fielding?’ he said. ‘So it is—you open the door, Janet.’

Janet promptly opened the door.

‘Why, Mr. Fielding, I said it was you!’

‘Well, Janet, are you glad to see me?’

‘Indeed I am.’

For a moment or two Robert kept far back in the room, almost like one who expects to have to stand suddenly on his defence. Then, seeming to take a more satisfactory view of the visit, he came forward to meet Fielding.

‘Well, Charlton, here you are as usual working away.’

‘We didn’t expect to see you, Mr. Fielding.’

‘Didn’t you really, Mr. Charlton? Why not now, might one ask? A man may occasionally visit his rooms, mayn’t he?’

‘Yes; but when one has become a grand swell, you know, and lives with one’s friends in a great West-end square, one isn’t expected to come back very often to a den like this.’

‘Piff-paff! I have been back to the den several times lately, only you didn’t know anything about it. I come and go, follow my own whim as usual, Charlton. Don’t you remember the talk we had one night about the rolling-stone and the mill-stone? I like the den; perhaps it suits me best.’

‘We are glad to see you again, Mr. Fielding, at all events,’ the meek Janet ventured to say.

‘Thank you, Janet, I do believe you are. I don’t quite know about your husband; but he is such a surly old bear, one never expects much gladness from him. I say, Charlton, are you well acquainted with the history of Ireland under the reign of Queen Elizabeth?’

‘No, I can’t say that I am.’

‘Because if you were you would know that there was a distinguished Irish chieftain of that time who went by the name of Surly-boy. I should think you must be a descendant of his.’

‘Well, there’s nothing to make a man particularly lively here. You have more the luck of it, Mr. Fielding.’

‘To be sure; yes, your only jig-maker! Well, I have come now to hale you and Janet—Mrs. Robert Charlton, of course I mean—by force of arms, if needs be, down to supper in my little den, just as we had it once before, don’t you remember, Janet?’

Yes, Janet remembered very well. That was indeed a pleasant night. The young man’s voice sounded sweet and cheery in her ears that had heard scarcely any but repining and melancholy tones for a long time, and Janet had always greatly liked Fielding and his kindly, companionable ways. To-night, however, she looked at him with something of a doubtful expression. His gaiety of manner did not seem quite like the old thing, somehow; it appeared to her to be forced and unnatural. Perhaps, she conjectured, he is only doing this to show that he doesn’t think any the less of his old friends because he has gone back to his grand family. It was kind of him all the same, she thought.

Robert accepted the invitation, much to his wife’s surprise.

‘Come, Janet, be quick,’ he said; ‘don’t keep Mr. Fielding waiting.’

‘Keep Mr. Fiddlestick!’ said Fielding. ‘We need not be so high and mighty in our politeness, need we, Charlton?’

‘We have been hearing such wonderful things about you, Mr. Fielding,’ Janet said in her delight, as she was preparing to go downstairs.

‘Truly, Janet? Anything good? That would be odd news, indeed, wouldn’t it?’

‘Oh, yes, delightful news; all about you and your brother, and how fond he is of you, and how you are always going to live with him, and be always a gentleman; oh, I beg pardon, I don’t mean that,’ and Janet blushed.

‘Don’t mean what, Janet? Don’t mean that I am going to be a gentleman? Why, now you are hard upon me.’

‘Oh, no, no! I only meant that of course you were always a gentleman; there’s nothing new in that; money can’t alter that.’

‘Janet, you chatter too much,’ her husband said.

‘Not too much for me,’ Fielding said. ‘It gives me pleasure to hear a friendly voice. Go ahead, Janet, chatter away, if your husband will call it chattering.’

No modest little woman ever yet found her fluency of speech increased on being told by one of two listeners that she chattered.

too much, and enjoined by the other to chatter away. Janet became silent all at once.

‘You’ve stopped her up,’ said Fielding; ‘see what an unlucky fellow you are, Charlton.’

‘It was you stopped me up more than Robert, Mr. Fielding,’ Janet said in great good-humour, ‘for you told me to chatter away.’

‘Very well; and why don’t you chatter away?’

‘Oh, because I seemed to be only making a fool of myself, and one does not like that.’

‘I wish I could make a fool of myself.’

‘Why so, Mr. Fielding?’

‘Because that would prove that the thing had not yet been done, Janet; there would be some comfort in that.’

‘Talking of people making fools of themselves,’ Robert interrupted, ‘is it true what we hear about Mrs. Vanthorpe?’

‘What do you hear about her?’

‘They say she is going to be married.’

‘Oh, I don’t believe a word of it,’ said Janet. ‘It’s only some nonsense my aunt has got into her head; I wouldn’t repeat such things, Robert.’

‘Why not? Where’s the harm? Mr. Fielding is sure to know whether it is true or isn’t.’

‘Why should I be sure to know?’ Fielding asked.

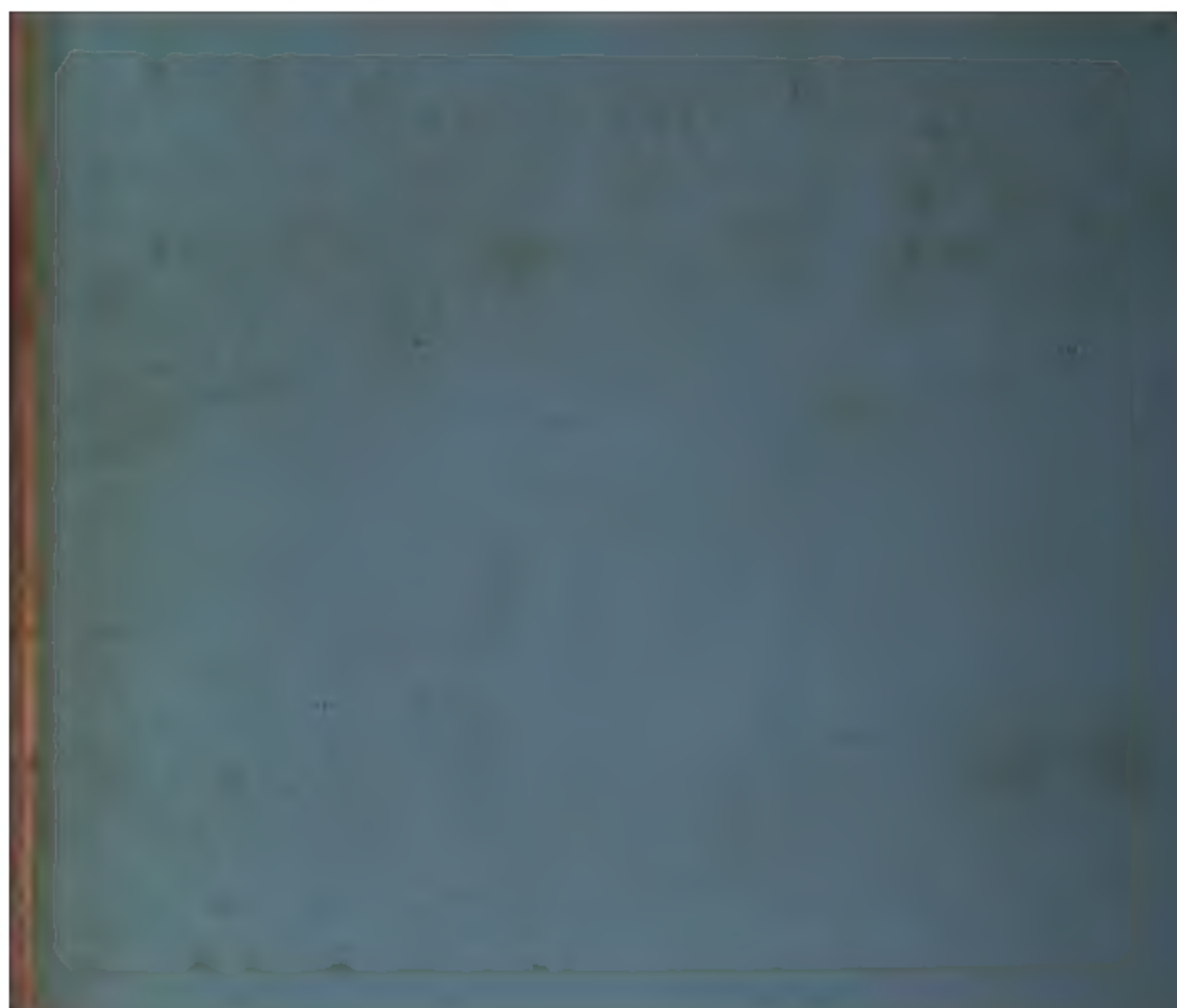
‘Well, because the story goes that she is to be Lady Fielding—that she is going to marry your brother.’

‘Oh, Robert!’ Janet protested.

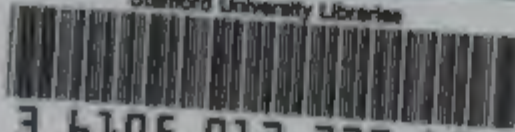
‘I know nothing about it,’ Fielding said carelessly. ‘I am not by any means my brother’s keeper; and Mrs. Vanthorpe isn’t likely to consult me. Come along; let us have supper, and let who will marry or talk of marriages.’

He drew Janet’s arm within his own and swept her down the stairs, leaving Robert to follow at such pace as suited him. Janet looked timorously into his face as they went down. She wished her husband had not talked in such a way; she could not understand why he had done so—it was so unlike Robert to repeat what he was fond of calling women’s silly gossip, and he generally professed the poorest opinion of anything said by Janet’s aunt, even when it happened to be good sense. But Mr. Fielding did not seem to have paid much attention to Robert’s words; at least, he talked and rattled all the way down as if he were in the highest spirits.

(To be continued.)



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